

L I G H T
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D A R K N E S S:
O R, A
C O N S I D E R A T I O N
O F

A Comfortable and Instructive Resignation
O F T H E

Church of God,

By an Eminent and Faithful Watch-
man upon his Departure.

O C C A S I O N E D

By the sad loss of that Faithful and painful La-
bourer in the Lord Mr. *Thomas Moor*, Junior

By C. P. (halbes)

*Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; labour not to comfort me, be-
cause of the spoiling of the daughter of my people: For it is a day
of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity, by the Lord
God of hosts, in the valley of Vision, breaking down the Walls there-
of, &c. Isa. 22. 4, 5.*

*Rejoyce not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall, I shall arise; when
I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the
indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him; until he
plead my cause, and execute judgment for me; he shall bring me
forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she
that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her, which said
unto me, Where is the Lord thy God, &c. Mic. 7. 8, 9, 10.*

London, Printed in the Year, 1669.

L I G H T

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D A R K N E S S

C O N S I D E R A T I O N

A Comfortable and Instructive Meditation

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To the Reader.

Christian Reader,



WHAT the occasion of the following Discourse is, thou mayest see before, viz. the death of one that laboured abundantly in the Work of the Lord, yet not he, but the grace of God that was with him, whom the Lord, in testimony of high displeasure to the survivors, took away to himself in the midst of his dayes and Work; and thereby hath occasioned and increased mourning and lamentation in the daughter of his Judah. Oh! that while he is thus lifting up his hand, we may see wherefore he is thus contending with us, that we may turn to him that smiteth, and seek the Lord of hosts, lest his wrath further break forth as fire, and devour, and there be none to quench it.

He was one that was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for he knew, that it is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth; and therefore he determined to know nothing else, in, and unto all things, save Jesus Christ and him crucified, as he is evidently therein set before us, and portrayed unto us; and did not preach himself, but Jesus Christ the Lord; nor was his zeal exercised about indifferent things, or lighter matters, for he was well assured that the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink (and so, not dayes, and times, and places, and gestures, and circumstances, and such things as perish with the using) but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost; and therefore did in these great things of God's Law serve Christ, and so was acceptable to God, and profitable to men; he was even set for the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, and that was to him the joy and rejoycing of his heart; and he had all his confidence begun and strengthened from the kindness and love of God our Saviour to mankind, and his feed-

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ing upon the flesh of Christ that was given for the life of the World, and the grace of God therein commended, by which Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, and in the vertue of his blood is raised again in that same body in which he bare our sins on the Tree; this was the beginning of his confidence, (and not some secret thing with him, or peculiar manner of love to him) the reason of his hope, the answer of his good conscience towards God, the foundation of his faith and hope, the argument by which he was reconciled to God, and strengthened to look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and where-through his heart was purified and principled to the unfeigned love of the brethren, and to the love of all men, yea of his enemies; from hence his hearts desire and prayer to God for them was, that they might be saved. The love of Christ did constrain him to perswade men, and pray them to be reconciled to God, and receive his grace to purpose, whether he were looked upon as one besides himself, or as a sober man, because he thus judged; that if one died for all, then were all dead, and he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again. In preaching the word he was instant in season, and out of season, and was (to that end that Christ might be magnified, and therein mens good endeavoured, and especially the profit of the household of faith pursued) in journeying often—in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, &c. Who was weak, and he was not weak? Who was offended, and he burned not? And in preaching Christ he did warn every man (as he had opportunity) and teach every man in all wisdom, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto he did also labour, striving according to his working which wrought in him mightily. He hath fought the good fight, he hath finished his course, he hath kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give to him at that day, and not to him only, but also to all them that love his appearing.

Doubtless God in such strokes is signifying his great displeasure with us, in removing so untimely one so much framed to a like mindedness with himself in Christ, whose heart was fixed to endeavour the good of all man, especially of them that believe, insensible to the mind of the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe, 1 Tim. 4. 10. As if he were thereby beginning to rise up out of his wonted place of mercy, and

To the Reader.

to forsake us; and we will be to us when he departeth from us. Oh! that we may consider his work, and the operation of his hands, lest he destroy us, and not build us up. In this day surely the Lord God of hosts is calling to mourning, and to weeping, and to belasting, and to girding with sackcloth. Oh! that there may not be beheld among us joy and gladness, slaying Oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine; But, O daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a River day and night, give thy self no rest. let not the apple of thine eyes cease. Arise, cry out in the night, in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord, lift up thine hands towards him. He hath trodden under foot thy mighty men; for this thou hast cause to weep, that thou shouldst procure such testimonies of displeasure to thy self, and that thine eye, thine eye, should run down with water, because the Comforter that should relieve thy soul, is far from thee.

Oh! that we may yet turn again to the Lord. We have still a Lord to turn to, when the servants are removed; the great shepherd to direct our eyes and hearts to, when under-shepherds are taken away: And to whom should a people seek but to their God? The Lord liveth, though the Fathers are gone, and Prophets do not live for ever; with him is no variableness nor shadow of turning. And we have yet encouragement to look to him, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and repenteth him of the evil, Joel 2. 13. There is no God like unto him that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage; he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy, Mic. 7. 18. Let us then lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the highest, with whom is forgiveness, that he may be feared; plenteousness of redemption, that he may be hoped in by us; for the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies; for he doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men, Lam. 3. 31, 32, 33.

But in our turning to him, let us search and try our hearts and ways, and turn from the things reprov'd, and which he is discovering us to be guilty of, and polluted with, otherwise we shall but turn to him feignedly, and not with the whole heart; Jer. 3. 10. If we will return, let us return to him, and put away our abominations out of his sight, Jer. 4. 1. To this end it is that the Lord's voice is crying to the City, O that we may be men of wisdom, to see

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his Name, and bear his Rod, and who hath appointed it, *Nitica. 6. 9, 13.* O that that also may not be verified concerning us, which the Prophet confesseth with shame they were guilty of, that though all this evil is come upon us, yet (though we assemble together, and seek him, and pray to him, yea seek him daily, and take delight in approaching to him) we have not made this our prayer unto God; that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand his truth; *Dan. 9. 13.* all his dealings with us are to this end, that our iniquity may be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away our sin, *Isa. 27. 8, 9.* And if we receive not this end of his, we shall still provoke him to wrath upon a further evil, and bring it upon us. Shall one take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing? *Amos 9. 5.* Will he remove his judgments, and cease smiling, and take away his snares, as it were, while he hath effected nothing by them, no surely. But if we be not reformed by these things, but will walk contrary to him, he will also walk contrary to us, and punish us yet severer times for our sins, *Lev. 26. 23, 24.* it will even provoke him at last to send a famine of hearing the words of the Lord, to remove all left that are in any measure faithful in seeking the good of others, and to deliver the residue to the multitude. And this was that which was much dreaded and deprecated by our Brother, a little before his being removed from amongst us, and hath been since threatened, in some measure, once and again; but hitherto in great mercy, and in a great measure he hath withdrawn his hand, and wrought wonderfully, that his name might not be polluted. Oh! that, because sentence against our evil work is not speedily executed, our hearts may not be set in us to do evil; but that we may by his goodness be led to repentance, and run together unto the Lord, and with one another, and in the acknowledging and forsaking our iniquities, cry mightily unto him whom mercy pleases, that he may forgive our sins, and heal our breaches, and be merciful unto, and spare the remnant of his heritage, and make them blessings in those several parts of the field, where the wise and gracious sower hath sowed them, and that the commandment may be kept without spot, unblemishable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, *1 Tim. 6. 12, 14.*

The following Treatise hath been several months at the Press, and met with manifold obstructions, otherwise it might sooner have seen it. Possibly it hath stuck so long there, that we, who are so apt to forget the blow when the rod is taken off, might be again

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To the Reader.

awakened to some fresh remembrance and consideration of the sharpness and severity of it, and the greater judgments threatened in it. And very probably, in some particular testimony of displeasure to him who undertook the work, and was so altogether unmeet for it, being of such an uncircumcised heart and lip, I mean

Thine unworthy servant in and
for the Lord,

Lyn-Regis,
August 6. 1669.

CHARLES PHELPES.

Turn us again, Lord, and to us return;
How long, against us, shall thine anger burn?
O pour not forth thy fury still like fire
Mind not our sins for ever, mark not in ire,
Against thy people, their transgressions, but
Say, 'tis enough, an end to such strokes put.

Many indeed, are our abominations;
Our clofe, and our appearing provocations,
O we have sin'd, and thou in all art just;
Righteous art thou, O Lord, yet since thou dost
Excel in goodness, there, help us to trust.

In our sad banisht state, when we were all
Undone, and lost, none could recover our fall;
No man could help his brother, thou didst then,
In love, a Lamb provide, for us poor men:
O now that grace remember, and a seed
Reserve, to teach the world, thy flock to feed;

C. P.

To the Reader

As I have been some time in the consideration of the
 subject of this book, and have been much
 assisted by the many kind friends who have
 been so good as to read it, and have been
 so good as to give me their criticisms, I have
 been enabled to bring it to the press in a
 more perfect state than it was at first.

These are the reasons why I have

been so long in publishing it.

CHAS. P. 1800.

CHARLES P. 1800.

I am in great haste, and to my sorrow,
 how long, I shall still be under pain;
 O you not for thy love will like the
 mind not out for ever, mark not in me,
 A giant thy people, their transgressions, but
 say, his enough, an end to such looks but.

Many indeed, are our abominations;
 O we have sin'd, and our appearing provocations;
 O we have sin'd, and when in all are just;
 Righteous are thou, O Lord, yet since thou dost
 Exact in goodness, there, help us to reach.

I in our sad painful state, when we were all;
 U whom, and lost, none could recover our fall;
 No man could help his brother, thou didst then;
 I in love, a Lamb provide, for us poor men;
 O how the great reminder, and a seed
 Redeem us, to reach the world, thy flock to feed.

C. P.



Light in Darknes.

Act 20. 32.

And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.



He Apostle in the foregoing part of the Chapter (having sent for the Elders of the Church of Ephesus) puts them in mind of his faithfulness, and constancy in service and sufferings, and tells them, *thus they all should see his face no more*; this he knew, it being, as it may seem, so revealed to him, *ver. 25.* and now appeals to them, and takes them to witness, *that he was pure from the blood of all men, ver. 26.* and to evidence this that he was not guilty of the blood of the souls of men (as *Jer. 2. 24*) he saith; *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsell of God, ver 27.*

The thing he had declared it was, all the counsell of God, namely, *the Gospell of the grace of God, ver. 24. the kingdom of God, ver. 25* even the testimony of Christ, as now revealed: in which is shewn unto us Gods purpose, and grace, his counsells of old, which are faithfulness, and truth; as *Isay 25. 1.* And out of the bowels whereof, all the Counsells of God concerning mankind as fallen do issue; and that in which God is giving us good counsell, good doctrine, as *Prov. 4. 2. 6.* To the end we might have his testimony, and testimonies therein, as the men of our Counsell's *Psal. 119. 24.* this was the Apostles rejoycing now not before God (for though he knew nothing by himself; yet he was not hereby justified, *1 Cor. 4. 4. Luke 17. 10.* he onely desired to have the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ to appear before God in, even that now manifested by the faith of Christ unto all (that have sin-

ed; in the preparation tender, and some influencings forth of it) and upon all that believe, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. with *Rom.* 3. 22, 33. *Gal.* 2. 16.) but before them, and as to his ministration, and so his rejoycing was this, the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had had his conversation in the world, and more abundantly towards the believers: *1 Cor.* 1. 12. so when he was ready to be offered up, he saith to *Timothy*, *I have fought the good fight, &c.* *2 Tim.* 4. 7.

This was that he had not shunned to declare, namely, all the counsell of God, and so he hath kept back nothing that was profitable, *ver.* 20 he had not shunned, or drawn back.

He was not deterred from declaring the Gospel by sufferings, and persecutions, of which he pertook more abundantly, *ver.* 18, 19, 22, 24. Or because of false brethren, or false Apostles, least he should displease them; in lighter matters he complied as far as possible for the Gospel sake, *So he became all things to all men, that he might win some, but he contended earnestly for the faith, and would not give place by subjection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with them.* *Gal.* 2. 4. 5. *2 Tim.* 4. 7. (oh that we were followers together with him herein, then should we be less contentious about meats, and drinks, and da's, and places, and gestures, and circumstances about some lighter matters of Gods law) or because of any weariness to the flesh, or weakness, and passions in brethren, which yet was a burthen, but declared the testimony in all its branches. Hence he admonisheth them, *ver.* 28. *take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the flock &c.* namely, because he had declared to them all the counsels of God, and had given them such a good example, they ought therefore to take the more abundant heed, lest being thus armed, and furnished, they turned back, as *Psal.* 78. 9. like that *2 Tim.* 3. 17. & 4. 1. And this caution he presseth home by that *ver.* 29. *I know that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in &c.* Namely, either cruel persecutors, as *Mat.* 24. 16. or false Prophets, *Math.* 7. 15. so our Saviour tells his Disciples a little before his departure *that soon after, false Christs, and false Prophets, would arise Math.* 24. 24. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things &c. *ver.* 30. Namely, because of sufferings to be indured, and iniquity

Light in Darkness

iquity abounding under forms of godliness, wherefore they might fit themselves by retaining the things reproved, to show to our Saviour signifies, that as the consequent of these things many would be offended, *Adm. 24. 8. 12.* So *Petr* when departing, *2 Pet. 1. 14. & 2. 1.* So *Jehn. 1 Joh. 2. 18, 19.* from hence again he provokes them.

Therefore watch, saith he, *ver. 31.* now there was more abundant need to watch, when such a faithful watch man was taken away; namely, to watch daily at his gates for wisdom and to exhort one another; yea in the light of the Lord over themselves, and one another, that they might be nourished up in the words of faith, and to watch and pray lest they enter into temptation, and fall from their steadfastness, or lest they sleeping, the enemy come, and sow tares, *Math. 13. 25.* and he proposeth his own example to stir them up, namely, that he created not to warn &c. In which he shews unto us, that in declaring all the counsell of God, he so did it, as therein, and therewith to warn of the errour of the wicked, both in their thoughts and ways; and it is good to observe it, that we may be preserved both from such a declaring the counsell, as therewith to suffer in our opinions and from such a warning men, as doing it without the counsell of God, as many do. He did so preach Christ, as in and with it to warn every man; and so warn every man, as in and with the preaching of Christ, his speech was always with grace seasoned with salt; or otherwise he could not have been pure from the blood of all men. *Col. 1. 28. & 4. 6. 12 Tim. 4. 2. Eph. 3. 18.*

And in this account the Apostle gives of his faithfulness, we may be occasioned to call to remembrance how much our Brother, lately taken from us, and with the Lord imitated him herein; He was doubtless much like minded with the Apostle, and if I should say I know no man more like minded, who did naturally care for the prosperity, and good of the Churches, it would not comfort him, nor I hope offend others, who indeed knew him. How faithful was he in declaring the testimony of Jesus, as delivered by the Apostles, and for many years warning therewith; and notwithstanding the reproaches and sufferings he endured from men, and exercises he met with from brethren, and the burden of his family, and others with him, even the weak (for his hands ministered to his necessities

and theirs, as the Apostle saith, *ver. 33, 34. and he coveted no mans gold &c.* Which I will not say the Apostle speaks to shame these; but to warn them he might, as 1 Cor. 4. 12. 14. Nor do I mention this of our Brethren labouring to shame any; but if in mentioning it, my self, or others be reproved, and God set it home, let us not reject it, but take shame to our selves that our care was no more toward him, that he might have been at more liberty to have attended the things of Christ: and still it was more blameworthy, if any raised or received any false reports that they might hereby cloak their covetousness, and shut up the bowels of others) yet his heart was exercised for the good of all, and especially good of believers, and so exercised, as that his body and members were employed herein to admiration, considering his great weakness, and many infirmities, he did gladly spend himself, and was spent for others good, oh that there were no reason to adde the following words in, 2 Cor. 12. 15.

1. The Apostles faithful resignation of this part of his charge (for upon him came daily the care of all the Churches) *I commend you to God, and the word of his grace.*

2. A further declaration of the excellency of the person, and thing to which he commends them, laid down by way of motive and to perswade them to commit themselves to God, and apply themselves to the word of his grace, Which (God and word &c. *is able to build you you up and give you an inheritance &c.*

1. The Apostles resignation of his care. And now, Brethren, I commend you to God; &c.

In which resignation we have,

1. The time of it, *Now.*

2. The persons whom he resigns, *Brethren.*

3. The resignation it self, *I commend you &c.*

1. The time when he thus solemnly resignes them, *Now, namely,*

1. When they were full of heaviness, and sorrow had filled their hearts because of his departure from them for ever, as to any further personall visiting of them, or being visited by them, he did not cease or fail from among the children of men (as our Brother, the removall of whom was the occasion of this discourse, doth) but was so taken away from them, that he should be no more of any personal usefulness to them, as to his bodily presence amongst them, for they should see his face

no more. Oh this is a time of wailing, and heaviness, when God is taking away faithful ones in the midst of their dayes; or work, a day of trouble, and perplexity by the Lord God of Hosts in the valley of vision, Where the vision of all, even the vision of all visions, and that in which all may see themselves concerned, the testimony of Christ, in which (especially and fundamentally in the first branch of it) there is declared tidings of great joy to all people, hath run and flowed abundantly, like a River in low places, to the causing fatness, and fruitfulness, I say, there, a day of perplexity, breaking down the walls that his judgements may break in, threatening to plant his vine in a dry and thirsty ground, this is a lamentation and shall be for a lamentation: as *Ezek.* 19. 13. 14. And the Lord God of Hosts in this day is calling to weeping, and to mourning, especially those that are devout persons, fearers of him, *Isa.* 22. 4. 5. 12. *Act.* 8. 2. And thus were these exercised to whom the Apostle speaks as *ver.* 37. 38. They all wept sore, and fell on Pauls neck, and kissed him; sorrowing most of all, for the words that he spake, that they should see his face no more, it might have occasioned heaviness though he had departed but for a season; but they sorrowed most of all because they should see his face no more, and because hereby a way was made, not only for Gods anger to break forth more immediately: but for evil men, and seducers to come in amongst them, as *ver.* 29. 30. *Isa.* 57. 1. 4. 5. *Psal.* 12. 1. 4. And now they might with sadness remember how they had failed in shewing forth Love to him, so as his hands had ministered to his own necessity, and those that were with him; Yet now when they were thus full of grief, he thus resigns and commends them to God, &c. To signifye;

That when faithful and eminent watchmen, and instruments of help are taken away, and sorrow is thereby greatly occasioned, this is now proper to moderate our grief, that we sorrow not as those that have no hope, That he that keepeth Israel shall never slumber, nor sleep, the Lord liveth, and is faithful to keep our souls, supply all wants, and persevere what concerns us, when the good man is removed, or perished out of the Earth. This therefore he now speaks, that they might not be swallowed up with overmuch grief, he speaks it not to prevent all sorrow, it is meet to be humbled unde

under God's mighty hand, and ashamed before him; when our Father thus spits in our face, who is the God of grace; when he covers us with anger, and persecute us, when he slays and pitties not; when he covers himself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass thorow, as *Lam. 3. 42. 44.* And it is an evidence of great hardness, and insensibleness, when Gods hand is so highly lifted up, not to see, or take notice of what he is reprovng, *1/4. 26. 11. and 57. 11.* Nor doth the Apostle here rebuke the for sorrowing, as he doth those at *Cesarea*, who wept because of some troubles that were to come upon him at *Jerusalem*, for he was not so taken from them, as from these, but saw them again, *Acts 21. 13. with 25. 1. 4. &c.* But this he may speak, and it is proper, to qualifie, and moderate our sorrow, that we exceed not herein, that there is the God of grace still to commit our selves to, and have our expectation. From in this time of great affliction. (Indeed while I am thus speaking, I am somewhat fearful lest this consolation, on such an occasion, be generally needles; I mean, that there is more fear of not sorrowing enough for such an heavy testimony of displeasure as God hath been ordaining to us, then grieving abundantly and out of measure for it, out for the sakes of some, and to restore comfort to them, and to their mourners, I speak it, and what is noted may be a liting up, when God is thus casting down in his Providences, that the Spirit of such may not fail before him, surely at such a time, God, and his grace is sufficient for them *2 Cor. 12. 8. 9. 10.*

Thus our Saviour, when, because he tells his Disciples of his departure, sorrow had filled their hearts, he now to comfort them, in his prayer commits them to God; so now, saith he, I am no more in the World, but these are in the World; and I come unto thee, holy Father, keep thorow thine own name those whom thou hast given me, &c. While I was with them in the World I kept them in thy name; those whom thou gavest me, I have kept, &c. (of him it might be eminently said he was pure from the blood of all.) So now he comes to thee, and these things I speak in the World, that they might have my joy fulfilled in them *Joh. 16. 6. 8. 17. and 12.* So he when ready to depart, commands to the believers, and commends them to the word of Gods grace; *2 Pet. 1. 12. 16. & 3. 1. 2. 3. 4.* And

And so the Prophets, and holy men, have comforted, and encouraged themselves in the Lord, on like occasions. Thus *Isaiah* doubtless thou art our Father, though *Abraham* be ignorant of us (one that was a Prophet, and powerfully made intercession, who was called the friend of God, of whom God saith, *I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, &c.* In whose steps our Brother walked, *Gen. 20. 7. and 18. 18. 19.*) And *Israel* acknowledge us not (one that behaved himself princely with God, and by his strength, had power with him, yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed, And an *Israelite* indeed was our Brother, *Gen. 32. 28. Hos. 12. 3. 4.*) thou O Lord, art our Father, our redeemer from everlasting in thy Name, *Isa. 63. 15. 16.* With this *Israel* comforted *Joseph*, as with respect to himself, and his Brethren, and Children, *Israel* said, *Behold I say, the Prophets do they live for ever, Zech. 1. 5.* But God who has his holy immortality shall be with you, *Gen. 48. 21.* Thus *Micah* at such a time encourages himself, *Micah. 7. 1. 7. 9.* And *David* when sent out from the personal Society of God's people, yet saith he the Lord will command his loving kindness, in the day time (in the proper season of it, in the day of prosperity, and in the night his Song shall be with me in the time of affliction, while I sit in darkness, his triumphing Song over sin, death, hell, &c. That his own right hand, and his holy Arm hath gotten himself the victory) and my prayer unto the God of Life. See *Phil. 42. 8.* with *Mica. 7. 8.* *Psal. 98. 1. and 84. 10. 11.* And oh that we may not forget this consolation in Christ which still speaks to us, to wit, the Lord liveth; but that we may trust, and rejoice in him, and pour out our requests, and complaints to him, when we look on the right hand, and behold, but there is none that knows us, refuge fails us, no man cares for our soul, as *Psal. 142.*

2. Now, namely when he was departing from them, and had foretold them that grievous Wolves should enter in among them; and that of themselves men should arise speaking perverse things, &c. *Ver. 29. 30.* That they might be instruments of saving themselves, and others, so he signifies to us.

That

That now its high time for us to apply our selves to God, and to the word of his grace, when God is taking away, faithful and eminent watchmen, before the number of their days that are with him are determined, or in the midst of some good work, now we are called upon especially to awake to Gods righteousness, that we be not driven away by Wolvish persecutors, or carried about with divers and strange doctrines: to stir up our selves to lay hold on his strength, and have our hearts established with grace, yea and to watch one over another, lest any man fail of, or fall from, the grace of God, fighting the good fight, holding forth the Word of Life; See how solemnly, on this account, the Apostle awakens and charges *Timothy*. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his Kingdom (and so thee also for we must all appear before the Judgement seat of Christ,) Preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering, and doctrine. For the time will come when they need will indure sound Doctrine, &c. *But watch thou in all things, indure affliction, &c. For I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought the good fight, &c.* 2 Tim. 4. 1. 7. So Peter on like account stirs them up to a being mindful of the Commandments of the Apostles, &c. 2 Pet. 1. 13. with chap 3. 1. 3. 4. 16. 18. While such eminent and faithful labourers were living, others might be too remiss, and negligent, and think they might be excused because these faithful ones were so forward, and willing to supply their lack of service, and so resolute to warre this good warfare; but when God is depriving of such, he is calling aloud upon others to watch; and that those to whom he hath committed the word of reconciliation, and given his furniture for holding it forth should stir up the gift of God that is in them, that they may be preserved from the error of the wicked, and be pure, from the blood of all men, even for preaching Christ, and therewith warning every man and teaching every man in all Wisdom.

And indeed this resignation is particularly added to that
re-

remembrance the Apostle gives; that he had not ceased to warn every one with tears, and this to signify, that now especially it lies upon those that go before others in the word of the Lord to apply themselves to God, and attend his word of grace, that they may warn all doctrinally, and as need is personally; with the spirit of meekness, to warn the unruly, and deal faithfully, and plainly one with another in reproving, and rebuking as need requires, and occasion is given, and not to daub with untempered Mortar, and cry peace, peace, for some may not indure this afterwards: and though (I think) we cannot blame our Brother for unfaithfulness in this particular, yet he bewailed it that he had not warned when he had opportunity, and yet surely was a faithful reprover. *Oh take heed now especially of flattering, or giving flattering titles to any, and so of hating your Brother, and suffering sin upon him, Levit 19. 17.* That you may preserve your selves and one another in the grace in Christ; and warn while others will hear, as need is, lest they dye in their sins, and their blood be required at your hands, and let those that are faithful, and upright hearted among the believers, who are the glory of the Churches, say to those over them, when need requires; *Take heed to the ministry ye have received of the Lord, that ye fulfill it, as Col. 4. 17.* to such purpose the Apostle now commends them to God &c.

2. The Persons whom he thus resigns, and these he calls Brethren, and speaks.

1. Directly to the elders of the Church, those appointed to be guides to the rest, who had doubtless also some gift given for feeding the Church, and so at least were Pastors, and Teachers: At that time none were chosen into office but such as were apt to teach: and these he calls Brethren, we might say in a manifest consideration: but shall here only say they were Brethren in a peculiar sense, holy Brethren, and such as were put into the Ministry, and so Brethren,

1. To the Apostle.

2. One to another.

1. To the Apostle and so to denote.

That though he was preferred before them, yet they were appointed to the same Service as he was, in some measure fitted for the work of the Ministry, and this is for instruction to other believers, that they may not despise those that are over them in the Lord, because they have not such knowledge and utterance as others who are taken away, but to look upon such as are faithful in the Lord as Brethren of the Apostles, and of those that have more eminent gifts, and fitness for holding forth the word of Life; it was a great fault among the *corinthians*, and they were reprov'd for it, that they were puffed up so one against another; *one was of Paul*, another of *Apollos*, &c. Whereas all were theirs, and they fellow-labourers. 1 Cor. 3. 4. 9. 2 Cor. 6. 1. and by their thus overvaluing some, they were apt to undervalue others, and set light by them, hence that instruction, and admonition, if Timothy come, see that he may be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. let no man therefore despise him, &c. 1 Cor. 16. 10. 11. So again, if any require of Titus, he is my partner, and fellow helper concerning you, or our Brethren, they are the Messengers of the Churches, &c. Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the Churches the proof of your love, &c. 2 Cor. 8. 23. 24. These though they were not Apostles, nor might have an Apostolical gift yet were their Brethren.

2. Brethren one to another, and so to instruct them.

1. That they should not lift up themselves one above another, or love to have, and seek after preheminance as did *Diotrophes*. 3 John 9. That they should not seek to Lord it one over another, when he was removed; he himself acknowledges that he had not dominion over the faith of others, but was an helper of their joy. 2 Cor. 1. 24. And it was good to follow him herein, and not to seek dominion one over another (though yet it is good for others to take notice of their different gifts, and of the faithfulness, and diligence of such as exceed others therein,) he may use this expression to seal home such an admonition: As our Saviour doth; Be ye not called Rabbi for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are Brethren, Mat. 23. 8. the Disciples of Christ are incident to this evil, and too apt to strive who shall be, and be accounted

counted the greatest, and now the Apostle, that faithful watchman was taken away, some might be ready to follow such an inclination, and therefore he may give this title to them to instruct humility, and to demean themselves one to another as Brethren, who had all one Master, or otherwise they might fall into that great evil, and speak perverse things to draw away Disciples after them, of which the Apostle doth premonish, ver. 30.

2. To intimate that they should love one another and take heed of falling out one with another, *that as their hearts were purified in obeying the truth by the Spirit so the unfeigned love of the Brethren, so now especially, they should love one another with a pure heart fervently,* as 1 Pet. 1. 22. It was now high time, when this peace maker was taken away, and God making a way for his judgements, as ver. 20 30. To love as Brethren, and to endeavour to seek, and to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, that so they might, if possible, stop that breach God had been making, and by their being perfectly joyned together Gods blessing might be with them, *Psal. 133.* Otherwise they might cause divisions, and fit themselves for drawing disciples after them, ver. 30. The way to be kept from evil, even from the evil one, and evil spirits, and their designs, yea from all evil is to be one, as in judgement, and design, so in affection, so much may be signified in that order in our Saviour's prayer for his Apostles; the first thing, or the end of the first thing he prays for them is, that they may be one, and the next thing that they may be kept from the evil, *Joh. 17. 11. 15.* thus our Saviour even when his hour was come, within six dayes before his departure, oftentimes instructs, and commands his disciples to love one another, that so they might be strengthened against persecutors, and false Christs and false Prophets see *Job. 12. 1. and 13. 34. 35. and 15. 12 17. 20.* So the Apostle *Joh. 1. Joh. 4. 1. 7.*

2. And yet the Apostle directs his speech to them as elders for the good of the Church, and so as including the Church also, and for instruction to them; not as if the Apostle only commended the elders to the Lord, but it was of concernment to all, as *1 Tim. 14. 22.* And so what our Saviour sends to the Angels of the Churches, it was for the good

of the Churches Rev. 1. 1. and therefore at the close of every particular Message, it is said he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. And so it was them all he commended to God; &c.

3. The Resignation it self, I commend you to God and the word of his Grace.

In which we shall inquire, and shew,

1. Who the person is, and what the thing to which he commends them?

2. What is here meant by commending, and what is imported therein.

3. Wherefore he now commends them to this person, and thing?

1. Who the person is, and what the thing to which he commends them.

1. The person is not such, or such an elder; or brother among them, who might be esteem'd more faithful and able than the rest, no; he here commends them not to *Timothy* who was now with him ver. 4. though he was appointed to some oversight over them; to charge some that they taught no other Doctrine than that according to Godliness, and to ordain elders, and deacons, and it is evident that to this end he was left at *Ephesus* before this time, in that the Apostle saith, *these things I write unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly*, 1 Tim. 1. 3. and 3. 14. 15. But now he saith he knew they should see his face no more. *Yea though the Apostle gave that high account of him, that he had no man like minded*, Phil. 2. 20. 22. Yet he commits them not to him, nor to any Brother; no, it was possible there might be infirmity, or unfaithfulness found with them: And yet this I say not to lead you to neglect the fellowship, and helpfulness of Brethren, it is good to be companions of them that fear him, and to know them that are over us in the Lord, and admonish us: But the Apostle here shews his great faithfulness, and abundant care for these, in committing them to him whose they were, and to whom none is to be compared, or likened, yea to him, who would, in committing themselves to him, order the hearts of brethren as might be most for mutual good, for all are his servants, and he puts earnest care into the hearts of
ing

instruments 2 Cor. 8. 16. and so this resignation is like that
Ab. 14. 22. When they had ordained them elders in every
 Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them
 (not to the elders, but) to the Lord on whom they believed.

The person then to whom he commends them, is God, not
 Man, simply, and yet not to God as absolutely, and imme-
 diately considered, but to God in Christ, in whom he is pro-
 pitious toward us, and thorow whom he takes care of us
 poor sinful ones, 'tis the God of grace he resignes them to
 as is imported in saying the Word of his grace: Who the
 person here spoken of is, the Apostle helps us to understand,
 viz. That it is Jesus Christ, who is said to be the great God
 and our Saviour, *Tit. 2. 14. Immanuel, God with us, who is*
God in our Nature, and for us. Is. 9. 6. I say the Apostle
 helps us so to understand it by the immediately foregoing use
 of it, in *v. 28* feed the Church of God which he hath pur-
 chased with his own blood, like that, *1 Joh. 3. 16. He that*
perceives we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us,
it was God that was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, and
the Father in him, 1 Tim. 3. 16. And so it was one that was
 infinitely worthy, one that had bought them, there was no
 reason for any to take offence at this resignation, was Paul
 crucified for you? did any among them redeem them? no
 surely, but worthy hereof is the Lamb for he was slain; and
 had redeemed them, *Rev. 5. 9.*

It was God their shepherd to whom he commits them,
 whose flock they were *v. 28. 29.* And whom he had bought
 with one price, after a double consideration, according to the
 will of God and our Father.

1. He was such an one as had bought them with his own
 blood, or with himself in the vertues thereof, and that in
 common with all men, for he gave himself *Isa. rans. me for all, as,*
1 Tim. 2. 6. Namely, for all men, as is evident, in that it is
 part of the proof he gives to evidence that God will have all
 men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth,
ver. 4. And the Apostle there speaks of his giving himself a
 price of redemption, not to, but for all, it was to God he
 gave himself a ransom; as is also evident that he speaks of
 it as done in order of Nature before he was Mediator, and
 by vertue whereof he is the Mediator, making intercession

for

for transgressors, and to that end he might be a testimony, and testified in due time, ver. 5. 6. And so he gave himself a price of redemption to God for all that he might redeem them unto himself, that they might be his, and he be their Lord, *Rom. 14. 9.* That the sentence of banishment that was against them might be released to him, and that they might be under his dispose, *that the world shew him might be saved,* Joh. 3. 17. He is raised again for our Justification who was delivered for our offences, and hath received an acquittance from all our sins imputed to him; he was justified in the Spirit's raising him, and hath by himself, without any knowledge, motion, compliance on our parts, or any thing required of us) *purged our sins, and this he hath done before he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high,* Heb. 1. 3. And so made peace, slain the enmity, drawn all men to himself, *so as that the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement to the Son,* Joh. 5. 22. He hath purchased, and bought all men, and hence all Lands, all the earth, are instructed to make a joyful noise unto the Lord, and to know the Lord is God, *it is he that hath made us; (when we had marr'd our selves) and his we are, we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture,* Psal. 100. 1. 3. 4. He hath bought them who had corrupted themselves, and whose blot it was that they were not his Children, but were a per verse, and crooked generation, *Deut. 32. 5. 6. He hath redeemed them that speak lies against him, Hol. 7. 13. Yea such as deny him, and bring upon themselves swift destruction thereby,* 2 Pet. 2. 1. in short, he is Lord of all men, because he dyed, rose, and revived for them and this to a gracious end, while called to day, that all men should honour him, as they should honour the Father, *Rom. 14. 9. Joh. 5. 22. 23.* And hath so redeemed them unto himself, that no man shall perish for ever in that first death, but be raised by the man Christ Jesus, and then they shall not be judged by the Law as they fell under it in Adam, but by the Law of liberty, in which liberty is proclaimed from the curse of the Law, *Jam. 2. 12.* O what a faithful designation was this and what encouragement to leave our selves with him, and commit our selves to him, who hath thus manifested his grace! and to moderate our sorrow, *in that he*
lives

lives who was dead, and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of hell, and death, Rev. 1. 18.

2. More directly the person to whom he commends them it was God who had purchased them with his own blood, namely, redeemed them out of the World, and from amongst men, and that thorow the presenting his blood to them, and commending it before them in the pretious and excellent ends and vertues thereof, in which he was raised from the dead, peace made righteousness compleated, Spirit received, a new testament, and everlasting covenant confirmed, eternal redemption obtained, in glorifying of which by his Spirit, and rendring it thus pretious in his testimony, he had redeemed them, and bought them of themselves, and from their vain conversation, 1 Pet. 1. 18. 19. Redeemed them unto God out of the hundreds, and tongues, and so from the earth, and from amongst men, Rev. 5. 9. with chap. 14. 3. 4. Made them willing for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ to suffer the loss of all things, and to go on to count them as dung, Phil. 3. 8. 9. He gave himself to them for them, that they receiving him might give themselves to him, Eph. 5. 25. 26. Indeed he is thus buying all men that come to years of capacity, in due time, reconciling the World to himself, calling upon all the ends of the earth to look to him and be saved, 2 Cor. 5. 19. 20. Isa. 45. 22. But many refuse, and when the price is put into their hands, they have no heart to accept and embrace it; but when light is vouchsafed, they love darkness rather than light, and this is their great iniquity, and cause of their everlasting perdition, that when they are called they are not chosen, that they will not be elected, Job. 3. 18. 19. Mat. 22. 11. 14. But these, to whom the Apostle speaks, he had purchased with his own blood he was their Shepherd and they were his flock in a peculiar consideration, his Church, his Spouse, and such as were therefore the subjects of his peculiar love and most special care: Oh excellent one to whom he thus resigns them? Oh blessed encouragement to trust in him and not be afraid, and to look for his mercy unto eternal life, who in his love and pity had redeemed them of God in common with all from the curse of the Law, and thorow the commendation of his pretious blood had bought them of themselves!

Oh what ground to conclude seeing the Lord was their shepherd they should not want, and from his grace in laying down his life for them when sinners, and enemies, to be confident from his love therein commended that much more being reconciled they should be saved by his life, Rom. 5. 6. 10. and 8. 32. Gal. 2. 20. Had the Apostle committed them to any mean man, how faithful soever, he might have complained of it as a burden. Even Moses of whom the Holy Ghost gives this testimony, that he, *verily was faithful in all his house as a servant*, Heb. 3. 5. Yet complains of that charge lying upon him, *Wherefore*, saith he, *have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people unto me, and the reason of his thus complaining is intimated, when he saith; have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them? that thou shouldst say unto me, carry them in thy bosom, &c.* Numb. 11. 11. 12. As intimating he could have been more tender had he been the Father of them, but this encouragement we have in our God; Christ is faithful as a Son over his house, they are his own house, he hath conceived them all, he hath begotten them, and therefore can, and will carry them in his bosome (as a Nursing Father bears the sucking child) to that rest that remains for the people of God, they are his flock whom he hath purchased with his own blood; And therefore he shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the Lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young, Isa. 40. 10. 11. He who is a Son over his own house, and who hath said, if any man provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house he hath denied the faith, 1 Tim 5. 8. Is one that hateth the iniquity, he warns others of, one who loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity, and therefore will provide for his own house, his own Children which God hath given him, who are in an especial consideration the travel of his soul, he hath a fatherly affect on a motherly tender heartedness, toward them, can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the fruit of her womb; yea they may forget, but he will not forget his family, his house, his flock, the price of his blood in this double consideration.

3. Yea he who hath purchased them with his own blood

and God in our nature, and for us, God ever all blessed for ever, Rom. 9. 5. One in whom dwell all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, Col. 2. 9. Who is glorified with the Father ever (et), with the glory which he had with him before the World was, John 17. 5. All things that the Father hath are his, Joh. 16. 19 He is full of grace, and truth, the fountain of life, one who hath all power both in heaven, and earth, this is the true God and eternal life, 1 Joh. 5. 20. He who is their Shephard is Lord of all, friends and enemies, who is set down on the right hand of God in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this World, but in that also which is to come, Eph. 1. 17. John. This is the person to whom he commends them, one to whom belongs power, and with whom is mercy, who is beautiful, and glorious, excellent and comely for our escape, and so infinitely more worthy, then any instrument, and of whom we may say, as Elihu saith to Job, I will answer thee, that God is greater then man, Job. 33. 12. It was to him whom the Apostle Thomas once (and our Thomas often) called, my Lord, and my God, Joh. 20. 28.

2. The thing to which he commits them, it was not
1. The wisdom of this World, or of the Princes of this World which come to nought, he commends them, not to Logick, Philosophy, or to any such arts, or Sciences, to find out God by, which are of high esteem with men, and whereby men think they are fitted for better understanding, and more profitable, holding forth the word of Life, though if it had been needful at any time to have committed them to these, it might have seemed so, but been most seasonable now, considering 1. He speaks to the Overseers and Bishops among them directly, and 2. He forewarns them of Wolves coming in among them, and they were subtle, and powerful to deceive, and our wisdom would tell us that we need these things for discovering, and confuting them, but the Apostle takes not this course, but as he had avoided it, and came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring the Testimony of God (for he was sent to preach it not with wisdom of words) 1 Cor. 2. 1. and 1. 17. So he signifies the pernicioufness of it, not with wisdom of words, lest the gifts of Christ, should be made of none effect, and the Believers faith stand there.

3. Nor commits he them to the Scriptures simply, or otherwise then in them, to come especially to Christ, as the great thing therein testified of and so to the word of his grace men may search the Scriptures, and hear them read frequently, and yet be ignorant of, and not come unto Christ, and the word of his grace that they may have life, and so miss of it, *John 5. 39. Acts 13. 27.* The holy Scriptures are no otherwise able to make wise to Salvation, then *thorow faith which is in Christ Jesus (as before) 2 Tim. 3. 15.* Oh this is the great thing in the Scriptures, and that by which God teacheth all things, and leads into all truth, *Joh. 16. 43. 14. and unto which he gives testimony Act. 14. 3* and that by which all the Scriptures may be opened for his testimony of Jesus is the *power of prophecy*, the quintessence of all writ, and it is the wisdom of God, hence our Saviour in and by the Light he opened the Scriptures to his Disciples, and inflamed their hearts, and opened their eyes to understand the Scriptures, *Luk. 24. 25, 27, 32. Acts 5. Rev. 19. 10.* And it is the power of God, this was that which Christ was anointed to preach, and he spake as one having authority, and not as the Scribes, to whom the vision of all was as a sealed book, for though they were zealous for, and strict in the observing lighter matters, yet they passed over the great things of Gods Law, judgement, and the love of God. *Isa. 61. 2. Mat. 7. 20. 1 Cor. 1. 22, 23.*

The thing then to which he commits them, it is, the word of his grace, not of ours, as he had directed them to the most excellent person, so here to the most excellent means for the discovering of him to us; and this to shew us further the praise worthiness of this excellent one, and this is added that it may be a light to u in our darkness.

For some might say, how shall we know Gods name, or his sons Name, how shall we know he hath bought us, or hath any love toward us, whether he gave himself a ransom for us, and is our shepherd, many there are who seem to speak high of God, that bring an hard report of him, and deny that he cordially loves the greatest part of men, and so render his grace, and the ground of encouragement for our coming to him doubtful, and even cut off the feet.

Now that we may not be misled by them, or by our own

thoughts, which in times of such great correction especially are leading us to call into question his love, and faithfulness. He not only commends them to God, but to the word of his grace, in which we may behold him as to be strengthened to hate thoughts, our own, and others, for every word of God is pure. *Prov.* 30. 4. 5. That in God we may praise his word, in the Lord we may praise his word (and so) in God we may put our trust, *Psal.* 56. 4. 10. We need not that any man teach us, but as that anunting teacheth of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught us, we shall abide in him 1 *John* 2. 27.

Now for some usefulness to us in this thing to which he commends them, we shall consider,

1. What is this word of grace.

2. Why it is so called.

3. What is this word of grace.

Surely it is the same which he received of the Lord to testify, even the Gospel of the grace of God, *ver.* 24. And which he had preached, even the Kingdom of God, *ver.* 25. All the counsel of God, *ver.* 27. Even the Gospel of Christ, especial as it is now revealed in the Revelation of the Ministry, and that it is so appears by that, *AB.* 14. 3. And compared with what goes before, and follows, There we have an account given us of Pauls exercise at Iconium, and the success of it, and how God stood by him, for it is said, he gave testimony to the word of his grace, and when driven from Iconium, he came to Lystra, &c. And there he preached the Gospel, *ver.* 6. 7. now *ver.* 21. 22. It is said, he returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, exhorting them to continue in the Faith, namely in that word of faith, which he had preached, and they had received, in which expression he sums up in one word what he had preached at those three places, to signify that it was but one thing, and so that the word of his grace was the same he had preached at Antioch, *AB.* 13. 32. 39. and which he preached at Lystra, chap. 14. 7. to wit the Gospel.

Yea it there appears also, that by the word of his grace is meant such a discovery of it, as the Jews could not endure it was to the Jews, who were seeking after a sign, a stumbling block, namely, it is, especially in the first things of it, such

such a declaration of the grace of God, as in which glad tidings is proclaimed to every poor sinful creature of mankind, while it is called to day, to the worst of men, such as were the Gentiles, and so to idolaters, Adulterers, effeminate &c see *Act. 14. 2. 6* and *13. 45. 47.* with *1 Thes. 2. 15. 16.* Such as in which glad tidings of great joy is brought unto all people.

2. Now this is called the word of his grace, as in part is intimated and signified.

1. Because it discovers the grace of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Father in him.

1. In what Christ was abased, and became obedient unto for us and hath by means and by vertue thereof effected, and obtained into himself for us.

2. In what he is now doing.

3. In what he will do hereafter.

2. Because in and with this word he gives Grace to Men.

3. Because he makes them partakers of grace thorow it, that turn at his reproof.

1. It is called the word of his grace, because herein he discovers his pity and kindness to Manward, and that.

1. In what he was abased, and became obedient unto for us, and hath by means, and by vertue thereof effected, and obtained into himself for us, and is become, his grace is herein greatly evidenced, that we might behold it; he hath manifested his word and grace thorow preaching, and so

1. His grace was manifested in this, that he hath undertook, and was abased for us, was so excellent an one, it was God laid down his life for us *1 Joh. 3. 16* *Our who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God.* *Phil.*

2. 6. He was rich, the Lord, and heir of all things, and yet was abased for us; herein it appears it was grace: there was nothing in us, in that condition we were in, to deserve such a favour, and so to ingage him to it, yea much that might have hindred, as afterward may be seen. Nor any thing for the future could be expected from us that might recompense his kindness, yea his goodness extended not to him-

for

self, for he could not be added unto, for he was glorious with the Fathers own self before the World was, this was therefore grace indeed, and herein the grace of the Father did wonderfully appear, that he sent forth his only begotten Son, *Joh. 3. 16. 1 Joh. 4. 9, 10.* He hath given him for a standing witness of it to the people, *Isa. 55. 3. 4.*

2. His grace was herein manifested, and the Fathers in him, in the great abasement whereto he was abased, and whereto he, this great and glorious one humbled himself, that he might bring us back to God, and this may be summed up in one word, that he became poor, as *2 Cor. 8. 9.* or we may speak to it, in these three branches.

1. He was made flesh.

2. Made sin.

3. Made a curse.

1. He was made flesh, in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God, &c. and the word was made flesh, *1 Joh. 1. 3. 14.* God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, *Gal. 4. 4.* Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, *Heb. 2. 14.* He laid hold on the seed of Abraham, *Heb. 2. 16.* and Adam, *Luk. 3.* in that body prepared for him in the Womb of the Virgin, the king of glory made a marriage for his Son, in which our Nature was married, and united to the divine Nature by a close personall, and inseparable Union, in the person of the word, the Son of God *Mat. 22. 1. 2.* And without controversie, great is the mystery of godliness, (there was infinite depth of wisdom, contained in it, and unsearchable riches of grace, that) God was manifest in the flesh, *1 Tim. 3. 16.* and this was a great abasement, for herein he was made lower then his own creatures, for a little while inferiour to the Angels, which were made by him. for by him were all things created, visible, and invisible, *Heb. 2. 9 Col. 1. 16.* This is that which is greatly admired. What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of man that thou visitest him? for thou hast made him a little lower then the Angels, *Psal. 8. 4. 5.* with *Heb. 2. 6. 9.* Yea as he was made in a nature inferiour to that of the Angels, so in a condition lower then man, in his first creation, for he took not on him our Nature, as it

It was when first created, and before we departed from God but he was made in all points like unto his Brethren, namely as they were made as the fruit of their sin, as distinguished from sin is self. *Heb.* 2. 17. He was in all points tempted like unto us, sin only excepted, *Heb.* 4. 15. and so he was subject to hunger, *Mat.* 4. 2. to thirst, *Psal.* 22. 6. so weariness, (yea it may seem he was weary before his Disciples) *Joh.* 4. 6. To weakness *Psal.* 109. 24. he was a worm and no man (or, as some, no strong man. *Psal.* 22. 6. He himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses, *Mat.* 8. 17. He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, *Isa.* 53. 3. 4. He was subject to fear, and sensible of pain, shame, and reproach, *Heb.* 5. 7. and 2. 18. *Psal.* 69. 20. Yea as to the things of this World, he was very low, he was the reputed Son of a Carpenter *Mat.* 13. 55. Yea he himself was a Carpenter, *Mark* 6. 3. and was very poor, and needy, so as that others ministered to him of their substance *Psal.* 40. 17. and 109. 22. *Luke* 8. 3. though he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive, yet he so humbled himself, as to receive from others, *Act.* 20. 35. So poor was he, that when the Tribute Money was demanded of him, he wrought a miracle to pay for himself and Peter, *Mat.* 17. 27. *Exodus* have holes, and the Birds of the air nest, but the Son of Man, had not wherewith to lay his head, *Luke* 9. 58. He came not to be ministered unto, but to Minister, *Mat.* 20. 28. He took on him the form of a Servant, and was a Servant of Princes, and washed his Disciples feet, &c. *Phil.* 2. 7. *Isa.* 49. 7. He had no form or comeliness in him, no beauty that men desire him, he was despised, and rejected of men, and his own hid, as it were there faces from him, he was despised and they esteemed him not, *Isa.* 53. 2. 3. He was one whom man despised, whom the Nation (even his own Nation) abhorred *Isa.* 49. 7. and oh that he were not so still in this his great abscement, by many that would be, and are called christians, and profess themselves to be his disciples, who though they eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel, would yet be called by his name, to take away their reproach, as *Isa.* 4. 1.

And

And this abatement of his, to wit, his taking upon him our nature as subject to all our infirmities, was needful it be-
 loved him in all things to be made like to his bretheren,
Heb. 6. 1. 17.

5. Because otherwise he could not possibly have been fur-
 ther abased for us, as was necessary; had he not partook with
 us of flesh and blood he could not have dyed for us, as *Heb.*
1. 14. this way God boored, or opened his ear, and fitted
 him to do his will *Isa. 50. 4.* with *Heb. 10. 5.* for Christ must
 needs have suffered, and be risen again, or otherwise we
 must have necessarily remained in our sins *Act. 17. 2. 3.* and
 thereto it was needful for us that he be so humbled, it be-
 came him for whom are all things, and by whom, that
 Christ should suffer that his truth might be fulfilled, his
 justice satisfied, and his holiness evidenced *Heb. 2. 10.* with-
 out blood-shedding, there was no remission, *Heb. 9. 22* and
 blood by him to be shed, unless he had partaken of flesh
 and blood, and so we could not have been saved. For 'tis by
 means thereof he hath wrought salvation in himself and
 obtained all things into himself, and by which he is now sa-
 ving all men, especially them that believe, And will com-
 pletely save his Israel hereafter: it is all by means, and by ve-
 rue of his blood, his personal abatement.

As to what he hath done, and is become, 'tis by means of
 death he hath by the blood of his cross made peace *Col. 1. 20.*
Slain the enmity, that was in the flesh, and condition of mankind,
Eph. 2. 14. 16. Redeemed us from the curse of the law, *Gal. 3. 13.*
Destroy'd Satan, *Heb. 2. 14.* Obtained forgiveness of those sins
 imputed to the people, *Eph. 1. 7.* Confirmed a new testament of grace
 and precious promises, *Mat. 26. 28* Obtained eternal Redemption,
Heb. 9. 12. And hath all power and authority given unto him, *Ph.*
2. 7. 9. *Mat. 28. 18.* *Heb. 2. 9.* *Rev. 5. 12.* In short, the Father hath
 so loved the Son, because he so laid down his life for us, that he
 might take it again, that he hath given all things into his hands,
 and he is thorough offerings made perfect for us, *Joh. 3. 35.* with
chap. 10. 17. 18. *Heb. 2. 10.* Yea

It is by vertue, and thorough the discove-ry of his precious
 blood he gives life to the World *Joh. 6. 33.* with *v. 51.* & is re-
 deemeth them unto God & whereby the redeemed ones are
 purchased, *Act. 20. 28.* *Rev. 5. 9.* and are justified, *Rom. 5. 9* and
 have their consciences purged from dead works to serve the
 living

living God, *Heb. 9. 14.* and are washed and redeemed from their vain conversation, *1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. Rev. 1. 5.* and by which he speaks better things for us in heaven, than the blood of *Abel, Heb. 12. 24.* and is the Mediator of the New Testament, that the called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, *Heb. 9. 15.* Yea, 'tis that by which the everlasting Covenant is obtained, confirmed, and shall be performed, and all that sleep in Jesus raised in due time to the glorious enjoyment of it, *Heb. 13. 20. Zech. 9. 11, 12.* Oh precious blood, for it is the blood of God.

2. It was needful he should take our nature upon him, because otherwise our debt could not have been legally, or by the Law charged upon him; he was rich indeed, enriched with the Father's own self, but he was not engaged until he was pleased to undertake for us: But now being made of a woman, and marrying our nature to the divine nature in that person of the Son of God, he was by the will of God made under the Law, *Gal. 4. 4. Mat. 22. 1, 2.* and all our debts came upon him, and he became our bondsman, and entered into our obligation, and was our surety. Even as it is amongst men, though a man be never so rich and wealthy, yet he is not therefore chargeable by the Law to satisfy the debts of another; but now if he marry a poor Widow, that is greatly indebted, he then makes her debts which she had fore-contracted to become his to answer for, and satisfy, and the Law will now lay hold on him: So mankind having in the first publick man contracted such a debt, as they were never able to have discharged, *Psal. 49. 7, 8.* Our Jesus, who though rich yet was not engaged, was pleased by the appointment of the Father to marry our nature in its Widowhood, as it were, and so became answerable for the worlds trespasses and debts, which they had committed, and run themselves into, *2 Cor. 5. 19, 21.*

3. It was needful he should be made flesh, that the truth of our types of old might be found in him; and that he might answer what was the custom among the *Jews* by God's appointment in the case of redemption; for he was made under the Law, not only as all mankind was fallen under it, but as the *Jews* were under it, and so also he became by his being circumcised, and did observe the Law given to them, *Luke 2.*

21, 22. Now in that Law amongst them, if a man had sold away his possession, and was not able to redeem it; or if a man had sold himself to a stranger, and could not redeem himself, one of his kin or brethren might redeem it, or him; the right of redemption appertained to such a one, *Lev. 25. 23, 47, 49.* Yea, in some cases (as in that of *Ruth*) though a man were a near kinsman, and had thereby right to redeem, yet he must marry, and so buy also the Widow; *Ruth. 2. 20. & 3. 9. & 4. 4, 5.* and it was not needful that the next kinsman must do it, for such a one might be (not only unwilling, but) unable; any of his kin might redeem, *Lev. 25. 25.* Now to answer to this; Mankind had sold their possessions, and alien'd that from themselves; they are come short of the glory of God in, and unto which he did create them; yea, and had sold themselves to a stranger for nought, and were utterly unable to redeem their possession or themselves, *Psal. 49. 7, 8.* And Jesus Christ as he was in the form of God, was not of our brethren, nothing kin to us, he was in a nature infinitely superiour to ours; and those that were kin to us were not only unwilling, but all of them unable for it: He therefore that the right of redemption might be his, took upon him our nature; and so became kin to us; *For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are both of one, wherefore he is not ashamed to call them brethren,* *Heb. 2. 11, 14, 17.* And herein also he married it in its Widowhood estate, that he might redeem that which we had aliened and sold, and our selves also, who were sold to a stranger, even Satan; and so, though others were nearer a kin, yet being waxed so poor, and fallen into so great decay, that they could not redeem their brethren, nor give to God a ransom for their own souls, he is become our Redeemer; *Our Redeemer from everlasting is his name,* *Isa. 63. 16.* Oh! for ever blessed be he that did not leave off his kindness to such unworthy creatures as we were become, who were fallen into so great decay, and had sold our selves, and all we had, and were dead in sins and trespasses; but bought us of the Father from under the curse of the Law, and restored all we had forfeited, and aliened into himself for us.

2. Being thus made of a woman, and having taken on him our nature, he was made sin for us, and so became that for

for us which naturally he was not: Oh infinite grace! that the holy one of God, yea, he who was righteousness and holiness it self should be made sin; nor that he partook of the pollution or filth of it, for then he could not have redeemed us; such an one became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, &c. he knew no sin, he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; *2 Cor. 5. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 22.* he partook of our nature by a wonderful work of new Creation, the holy Ghost coming upon the Virgin, and the power of the highest overshadowing her, so that, that which was born of her it was an holy thing, *Luke 1. 35.* he was sanctified and sent into the world, *Joh. 10. 36.* and was in his incarnation the Son of God; the Lord created a new thing in the earth, a woman to compass a man, *Jer. 31. 22. Gen. 3. 15. Luke 1. 35.* But the guilt of our sins was imputed to him, and it seems it was concerning him that was spoken, *Psal. 69. 5. My guiltiness is not hid from thee,* that Psalm being a Prophecy of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory following. *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; for he made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, 2 Cor. 5. 19, 21.* That is, the guilt of all the trespasses of the world which occasioned the first breach and enmity between God and mankind, was imputed to Jesus Christ; even of all the trespasses of the world, which the world was guilty of before the consideration of his undertaking for it, or which they could have been guilty of before his grace that seasonably brings salvation to all men is vouchsafed. God did lay, or cause to meet upon him the iniquities of us all, even the guilt of that first offence of the first Adam, in which we all like Sheep have gone astray, and from whence we are naturally and necessarily found turning every one to his own way, *Isa. 53. 6.* And these are said to be his own sins, *Heb. 7. 27.* and he confessed them as his to answer for, where he saith, *Mine iniquities have taken hold on me, &c. they are more than the hairs of mine head, Plal. 40. 12.* And with respect to that first disobedience of our first Father, in which we have all sinned, and from whence we are unavoidably polluted, as we come to have a being from him, may that also be fundamentally meant, and intended by the Baptist; *Behold the Lamb of God that beareth the sin of the world, Joh. 1. 29.*

3. Having our debt thus charged upon him, and accepting of it as his to answer for, he was made a curse for us, *Gal. 3. 13.* and had the judgment of the world executed upon him, *Job. 12. 31.* a bitter cup prepared for him, which he willingly, for the joy set before him, drank of, in which there was the hiding of God's face from him, and the rage and cruelty of men, and fury of Satan, which was permitted and ordered by God, and so in all God went to Law with him, and thereby he was brought into the dust of death; his sufferings were, 1. More immediately from God. 2. By God's permission and ordering from men. 3. From Satan; by all which he was brought to death; all these, and in this order, are spoken to, *Psal. 18. 4, 5.* which Psalm, though it was directly spoken of *David*, as appears by the Title; yet it was also a Prophecy of Christ; and some things in it cannot fully be applied to any other person, as may be seen in the latter end especially; and the like order is also used in *Psal. 22.* And so,

1. The sorrows of death compassed him, even the sorrows or pains of death, which he endured as inflicted more immediately by his Father, which were as pains of a woman in travel, that cannot be delivered, yea inexpressibly greater; he suffered the torments of death, he was tormented for our transgressions, *Isa. 53. 5.* it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he put him to grief, he forsook him, *Psal. 22. 1.* The Evangelists all of them declare the greatness of those sorrows he was compassed about with, before he was apprehended by men. See *Mat. 26. 38.* *My soul, saith he, is exceeding sorrowful* (beset or compassed about with sorrows on every side) *even unto death*; as if our Saviour did refer unto, and open that, *Psal. 18. 4.* These sorrows were doubtless very great, and so great, as though they were in, or upon the soul, and so not so discernable to others as those more outward, yet they could not be hid from others, but the grief thereby occasioned was in some part visible, yet not the greatness of it. The Evangelist, *ver. 37.* saith, *He began to be sorrowful*, &c. but our Saviour (to signify the greatness of his exercise, was not known by others) saith, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.* Mark (*Chap. 14. 33.*) saith, *He began to be sore amazed*; both to shew the wonderfulness and marvellousness of the

the weight of that burden he was bearing, and bitterness of the cup he was to drink, and was now drinking; as also, *that he began to be afraid, Mark 16. 5, 6. Heb. 5. 7. Luke thus expresseth it; And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were, great drops, or clots of blood falling down to the ground, Luke 22. 44. So Job. 12. 27. Now (namely, when the judgment of this world was executing upon him, ver. 31.) is my soul troubled;* and these great and inconceivable pains he endured before he was apprehended by men, in all which we may in part see,

1. The greatness of the wrath he endured more immediately from the Father, such as it even made him to roar and cry, *Psal. 22. 12. and offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, Heb. 5. 7. his wrath lay hard upon him (as our surety) and he afflicted him with all his waves, Psal. 88. 3, 7. He spared not his own son, Rom. 8. 32.*

2. That God did forsake him for some time, and not presently hear him and deliver him as he did our Fathers, but left him to taste death, and feel the weight of that curse that was our due to have born, *Psal. 22. 1, 4. Yea, it seems God's wrath, and forsaking him, continued from first to last in this harvest of affliction; therefore in Psal. 22. 1. his crying out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, is set down before the sufferings he endured from men, and in Mat. 27. 46. a little before he commended his Spirit to God; yea (it seems as if) he so cried out when he yielded up the Ghost; for it is said, ver. 50. Jesus when he had cried [again] with a loud voice, yielded up the Ghost: Where [again] may be meant, not only as with respect to time, which might have been understood, though that word had been left out, as it is in Mark 15. 37. But [again] may be the same words also; as also appears by all the expressions in the verse in which it seems the Evangelist refers to, ver. 46.*

3. The frowns of the ungodly made him afraid, namely, their multitude and their rage against him; they made a noise like the noise of the Seas, and a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters, as if they would have born him down before them; *The heathen did rage, and the people imagine a vain thing, Psal. 2. 1, 2. He was a reproach of men, and despised of the people, even of his own, Psal. 22. 6. And so, he was betrayed*

betrayed by *Judas* under pretence of affection; *He that ate bread with him did lift up the heel against him*, *Psal. 41. 9.* This was a great affliction, and that for which he was troubled in spirit; not only outwardly troubled, and sad in countenance, as a man may be when he is not inwardly affected, but he was inwardly grieved for it and by it, *Joh. 13. 21.* and therefore surely he had not from the beginning determined him to do so, nor was the Author of this his iniquity. And those to whom *Judas* was guide for apprehending him were the chief Priests, and his own, amongst whom he had been teaching, these came out against him as against a thief, *Mat. 26. 47, 55.* This was a great grief, *He came to his own, and his own received him not*, year rejected him; he laboured in vain, and spent his strength for nought and in vain, for *Israel* was not gathered, *Isa. 49. 3. 5.* yea, they were the chief Priests, and his own Nation, that delivered him to the Gentiles, *Joh. 18. 35.* And now his disciples forsook him and fled, *Mat. 26. 56.* This added to his affliction, he looked for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but he found none, *Psal. 69. 20.* To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friends, *Joh. 6. 14.* but they were scattered and left him alone, *Joh. 16. 32.* And when he was thus apprehended by his enemies, and forsaken by his friends, he is led away to the High Priests, where the Scribes and Elders were assembled in Council; and they, instead of waiting for a legal charge and evidence against him, sought false witnesses against him to put him to death, *Mark 14. 53, Mat. 26. 57, 59.* This was matter of his complaint, *false witnesses did rise up*, *Psal. 35. 11, 12.* And when they found nothing, or nothing material, they laid snares for him, by proposing a question, and adjuring him to answer it; which when he had answered, they judge him to have spoken blasphemy, and to be guilty of death; and then they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of (or rods in) their hands, &c. *Mat. 26. 60, 68.* And now to add to his affliction, he is denyed by *Peter*. Yea, and the chief Priests and Elders led him away bound, and delivered him to *Pilate*, before whom they accuse him, *Mat. 27. 1, 2, Luke 23. 1, 7.* and *Pilate* sends him to *Herod*, and there he is vehemently accused by the chief Priests and Scribes; yea, and *Herod* also with his

his men of War, set him at nought, and mocked him, and
 arrayed him in a gorgeous Robe, and sent him again to Pi-
 late, Luke 23. 7, 11. And though he was determined to let
 him go, and fought once and again to release him, yet be-
 cause of the importunity of the people, & particularly because
 they cryed out, *If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsars friend,*
 he delivered him to them to be crucified, John 19. 4, 16. *The*
Kings of the earth stood up, and the Rulers were gathered together
against him, Psal. 2. 2. Many Bulls compassed him, strong
 Bulls of *Bashan* beset him round, they gaped upon him with
 their mouths as a roaring and a ravening Lyon, Psal. 22.
 12, 13. And he was hanged between two Malefactors, and
 so numbred with transgressors; yea, and now when they
 had so far accomplished their design, their hearts relented not,
 but still they reproach him, concerning his trusting in God.
 He trusted in God, say they, that he would deliver him, let
 him deliver him if he will have him, Psal. 22. 8. *Mat.* 27.
 41, 43. And this was a sword in his bones; *Reproach hath*
broken mine heart, saith he, *and I am full of heaviness,* Psal.
 42. 10. & 69. 20. And those that were instruments of this
 cruelty and shame to him, were the professed Church of God;
 and the Gentiles high and low; those that would not at an-
 other time been in company together, are confederate herein; in
 his adversity they rejoiced, & gathered themselves together;
 yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against him, they
 did tear and ceased not, with hypocritical mockers in feasts
 they gnashed upon him with their teeth, Psal. 35. 15, 16. And
 as this which he endured from men was a great affliction, so
 it was the greater at this time, because the hand of God
 touched him; they prevented him in the day of his calami-
 ty or fog, when the Father hid his face from him; *They per-*
secuted him whom God had smitten, Psal. 18. 18. & 69. 26. And
 though men were thus incensed against him, and enemies to
 him, because he bore witness to the truth which he received
 of his Father, and witnessed a good confession, and so per-
 secuted him for following and doing the thing that was good;
 yet as it was permitted and ordered to him of the Father, so
 it was a part of the curse which we had deserved; and herein
 God went to Law with him for our sins; and this appears
 in that, whereas the Lord by the Prophet saith, *Awake, O*
sword,

sword, against my shepherd, and against the man, my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts, smite the shepherd, &c. as herein giving permissive commission, and ordering the wicked which are his sword, to smite him, *Zeeb. 13. 8.* with *Psal. 17. 13.* *Mark 14. 27.* Our Saviour referring to, and citing that place, thus renders it: *I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad;* as signifying that God did execute this upon him, as part of the judgment of this world, *Mat. 26. 31.*

3. Yea the sorrows of Hell compassed him about, when men were thus persecuting and reproaching him; the power of darknels also added to his great sorrow, *Luke 22. 53.* *The Prince of this world, saith he, cometh, &c. John 14. 30.* that is, he came to afflict him, and execute death upon him, of which he had the power, according to the curse of the Law, *Heb. 2. 14.* His soul was in Hell, *Acts 2. 27. 31.* He did taste the sorrows of it, even of all those sorrows and torments of the first death, and hell thereto appertaining, which we must have endured, had he not undertaken for us, and in the suffering whereof we had remained miserable for ever. And he came also together herewith to move him to put forth his hand to iniquity, and to go out of his Fathers way, that he might avoid further troubles; he came to tempt him to sin, *John 14. 30.* with *Mat. 4. 3. &c.* He thrust sore at Christ, that he might fall, *Psal. 118. 13.* He was in all points tempted like unto us, yet without sin, for the Prince of this world found nothing in him for the temptation to work upon, *Heb. 4. 15.* And unto both these wayes of Satans afflicting him, respect may be had in that prayer of the Prophet, speaking in the person of Christ, and concerning him, *Psal. 22. 20.* Deliver my darling (or my only one) from the hand or power of the dog; namely, of Satan, who was now bruising his heel, and causing great sorrows unto him; he was now tearing of him, as it were, and therefore is he compared to a dog, *Mark 9. 18.* He had spoken of dogs before, *ver. 16. viz.* of the Gentiles; but here, as I conceive, of the Prince of the world; and *ver. 21.* Save me from the Lyons mouth, even from the mouth of him who as a roaring Lyon seeketh to devour, *1 Pet. 5. 8.* and who was tempting and moving him to go out of God's way, that he might not accomplish and finish the work the Father gave him to do.

And

And by all these great, inexpressible and inconceivable sorrows and pains, the snates of death prevented him; *He dyed for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried, &c.* 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4. Herein it appears that the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, and therefore we have good reason to commit our selves to him whose grace was so great, and who hath so discovered it in the word of his grace.

3. His grace still further appears to be great in this word of his grace, if we consider the persons for whom he was thus greatly abased, and that both as to their condition, and as to their number.

1. As to their condition in which they were, we have it declared, *Rom. 5. 6, 8, 10. While we were yet without strength, in due time Christ dyed for the ungodly. God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ dyed for us; when we were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his Son.* And so, when without strength to help our selves, sick, and sick to death, as water spilt upon the grounds, that cannot be gathered up again, *2 Sam. 14. 14.* when none could by any means redeem his brother, by any thing he could do, suffer, or offer to God, *Psal. 49. 7. Gal. 2. 21.* then he commended his love to us; yea, this great weakness and helplessness we had contracted to, and brought upon our selves by our voluntary departure from God: God made man upright, in a condition to have had communion with his Creator, but they sought out many inventions, *Ecc. 7. 29. Adam transgressed the Covenant, and there dealt treacherously against God, even as a Wife treacherously departeth from her Husband, Hos. 6. 7.* and not for want, but through wantonness listened to the lye of the tempter, and so brought death and misery into the world, *Rom. 5. 12.* Our comeliness was turned into corruption, and we retained no strength; and now to lay hold on us, when we had voluntarily disabled our selves, this was great love indeed. Amongst men this stirs up the bowels of their pity, when any one doth willingly and wilfully lame or disable himself; who will bemoan such an one? or turn aside to ask how he doth? But in such a state God pityed us; yea, when we were ungodly and sinners; ungodly, (such as did not worship him, or desire (and much less deserve) any favour; yea, acknowledged not our

fault, but sought to hide and cover it, *Job 31. 33.* and to throw it from one to another; yea, the man, as it were, secretly to cast it upon God; *The woman then gawest to be with me, she gave me and I did eat;* yet now he manifested his love to them that asked not after him, yea that hid themselves first from the presence of the Lord, and afterward sought to cover their transgression by hiding it in their bosom.

And sinners, such as had mist their mark, and were greatly deceived, they in their pride, not content with their state God created them in; but listening to the temptation of Satan, aspired to an equality with God, and to be as God's. Oh high presumption! to have a self-sufficiency in themselves, but they missed miserably what they in hearkning to the seducer proposed to themselves, and so became transgressors, and broke his Law, and thereby became such as God hates not though they had cryed, *Job. 9. 31.* such as he could not delight in, or have fellowship with; yet now he had compassion on us: *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,* 1 Tim. 1. 15. *Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust,* 1 Pet. 3. 18. yea, when we were enemies, enemies to him as well as to our selves, haters of him; *God was in Christ reconciling us to himself.* *David's* kindness toward *Saul* wonderfully wrought upon him, and it even broke his heart, because he killed him not, but spared his life, when it was in the power of his hand to have destroyed him: *If a man find his enemy,* saith he, *will he let him go well away? wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day,* 1 Sam. 24. 19. But alas *David's* love herein, though very rare amongst men, is not to be compared with this we are speaking of; for *Saul*, whom he spared was God's Anointed, and King, and therefore *David* could not put forth his hand against him and be innocent, 1 Sam. 24. 10. & 26. 9. But now on the contrary, he that so testified love toward us was the Lord, and heir of all things; it is Christ, the Lord's anointed that dyed, and we were his creatures and servants that had rebelled against him: Again, *David* parted with nothing that was dear to him, much less laid down his life to shew kindness to *Saul*, only spared him; and forbore to touch him; but Christ dyed for our sins, that he might bring us back to God.

God. Is this the manner of man, Oh Lord God? *Greater love than this hath no man, than to lay down his life for his friends; but God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, and enemies, Christ dyed for us, Joh. 15. 13. with Rom. 5. 6, 8.* Great reason have we to break forth into admiration with the Psalmist, and say: *How excellent and precious is thy loving kindness, O God! Psal. 36. 7.*

2. The persons, as to the number, for whom he so humbled himself, were all of them whose nature he took; and in which he was made a little lower than the Angels; he was crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man, *Heb. 2. 9.* It was a high thing, too mean for, and below him, that he should be God's servant to raise up the Tribes of Jacob, &c. but God hath given him also that he should be for salvation to the ends of the earth, *Isa. 49. 6.* And this began to be preached by the Lord himself: *God so loved the world, saith he, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved, Joh. 3. 16, 17.* This he spake to one man, even to Nicodemus, that he might be born again. We are apt to think that a particular application of God's love, as men call it, might have been more proper in this case, when our Saviour was applying himself to one person; yet we see the course our Saviour, the Wisdom of God takes, when he is declaring the necessity of the New-birth, and directing to the means by which a man may be born again. And indeed, herein he shewes what is the water of which a man may be begotten again; namely, the pity and kindness of God to man-ward, and not some particular, or peculiar love to this, or that man. And from his mouth the Samaritans received and learnt this lesson. Now (say they to the woman) *we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him our selves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world, Joh. 4. 42.* So Joh. 6. 51. *And this was also confirmed unto us by them that heard him. We thus judge, saith the Apostle, that if one dyed for all, then were all dead; and he dyed for all, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.* Yes, this was that which they saw in the light and evidence of the Spirit, and accordingly did testify, even as the sum of their testimony, that the Father sent the Son, the Saviour of

the world, 1 *John* 4: 14. 1 *Tim.* 2. 4, 7.

4. In this Word is discovered to us his grace, in what he hath through and by means of his death effected and obtained into himself for us, and is become. And so,

1. That which he hath effected thereby is, that he hath saved us mankind in himself, from that so great a death, in which otherwise we must have perished for ever; for in Jesus Christ mercy and truth are met, righteousness and peace have kissed; he hath satisfied God's justice, fulfilled his truth, appeased his wrath, paid that our debt, answered the Law; and this is manifested, in that God hath raised him from the dead in that same body in which he was crucified, and in which he bare our sins on the Tree, and he hath brought him again from the dead through his blood, so precious was it in the sight of the Lord, *Heb.* 13. 10. That same Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, in that same personal body in which he dyed for our sins, is raised again, and this was of absolute necessity: for if he be not taken from prison, we must dye, and abide in our sins for ever, preaching is vain, and faith yain, &c. But he is raised from the dead, in that body which was pierced with a spear, and with those hands and feet which were nailed to the Tree, *John* 19. 34. with *Chap.* 20. 20, 25, 27. And unto his Apostles he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty dayes, *Acts.* 1. 3. And as he is raised in that very body in which he suffered, so also in that publick consideration, being acquitted from all our sins that were imputed to him, and having overcome all our death and enemies that had led us captive: He was declared and determined to be the Son of God (in whom he is well pleased) with power, according to the spirit of holiness in the resurrection from the dead, *Rom.* 1. 4. He is taken from prison, and from judgment, and as in him as in the publick man, all have dyed and suffered the whole of the curse due to them for our first departure from God, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. So in him, who is the last Adam, they are acquitted; For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus, *Rom.* 3. 23, 24. & 5. 18. He hath so purged away our sins from before the presence of God, the guilt whereof was imputed to him, as that now the Father

Father judgeth no man according to the Law, as they sell under it in the first publick man, *Heb. 1. 3.* with *Iohn 5. 22.* that is to say, no man is condemned or held out from God, either because our first Father hath sinned, and we in him, or because as we come to receive our beings we come forth and are born in sin, and so naturally and necessarily polluted and defiled; for he hath made peace, slain the enmity that was between God and mankind, taken out of the way all that was in the way contrary to us, broken down the middle wall of partition, and is become the way to the Father, and God hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, *Eph. 2. 13, 15. Col. 2. 13, 14. Ioh. 5. 22, 23. Gal. 3. 13.* And he hath spoiled principalities and powers, led captivity captive, and destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the Devil, *Col. 2. 15. Psal. 68. 18.* See how this began to be spoken by the Lord himself, as to both these branches, *Iohn 12. 31, 32.* Now, saith he, *in the judgment of this world* (to wit, it was now executing upon him when his soul was troubled, the guilt of the trespasses of the world, which made it liable to the judgment of God, being imputed to him; he was called to the judgment-seat, and made a curse for us, and God in him took vengeance of our iniquities, he judged and condemned sin in the flesh of Christ Jesus, *Rom. 8. 3. Isa. 61. 1, 2.* He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, &c. Now shall the Prince of this world be cast out (namely, out of his principality, and from being the Prince of this world, as he was according to that judgment, for we were fallen under his dominion necessarily, and must have so remained for ever, had not God devised this blessed means.) And I, if I be lifted up from the earth (namely, crucified, and hung on the Tree) will draw all men unto me. That is, by means of his death, who in the virtue thereof is discharged and acquitted, he would draw all men unto him and now (in the first sense) hath drawn them unto himself from under the judgment of this world, which was executed upon him, from under that sentence of banishment, according to which they were shut out from God, and must have perished in their sins; and from being under the necessary dominion of Satan, who was become the Prince of this world; from under both he hath drawn them unto him.

himself to be under his judgment, his gracious Government and Lordship, for to this end Christ both dyed, rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living; Lord of all, *Rom. 14. 9. All. 10. 36.* And to a gracious end did he dye to all, and is raised again, and hath the sentence of banishment remitted to him, and brought us under his kingdom, *viz.* that he might bring us back to God, *1. Pet. 3. 18. 2. Cor. 5. 15.* And of both these it appears the Psalmist prophetically speaks in *Psal. 136.* where he provokes to give thanks to the Lord for his mercy, and that first because of his creating all things, *ver. 5. 9.* and then for his great goodness towards the house of *Israel*, which he bestowed on them, *ver. 10. 12.* to which he adds, he remembered us in our low estate (when we were brought low for our iniquities, and were justly banished from his presence in the sentence of his Law) for his mercy endureth for ever; and redeemed us from our enemies, for his mercy endureth for ever, *ver. 23. 24.* I say, it appears he speaks of this redemption of mankind in Christ generally, and of his mercy to the Gentiles particularly, in that it is distinguished from his work of creation, his goodness to *Israel*, and his providing for, and giving food to all flesh. And the like is also said, *Col. 1. 14. 15.* yea, he hath so saved all mankind in himself, as that no man shall perish for ever in that first death, of which our Jesus tasted, and which he overcame, and hath abolished, but be raised out of it; for since by man death, by man also the resurrection of the dead; *For as in Adam all dye, so in Christ shall all be made alive; 1. Cor. 15. 21. 22.* And when they are raised, they shall not be judged according to that first rule of judgment, but God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (he is appointed the judge of quick and dead, and God will judge the world in righteousness by that man, *All. 10. 42. & 17. 31.* and the rule by which he will judge them will be) according to *Pauls* Gospel (in which is declared that Christ dyed for all, and by the grace of God tasted death for every man, *2. Cor. 5. 14. 15. Heb. 2. 9.*) *Rom. 2. 16.* And be that believeth (this Gospel as declared by the means vouchsafed) and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned, *Mark 16. 15. 16. Joh. 16. 8. 9. Rom. 2. 6. 11. Jer. 31. 29. 30. Ezek. 18. 2. 4. Psal. 68. 18, 21,*

a. He hath not only delivered us from so great a death, and curse, and from the hand of our deadly enemy who hated us, but hath obtained and recovered all things into himself for us, and is made perfect through sufferings, that he might bring us back to God; namely, he hath obtained forgiveness, spirit and grace, and all power and authority in the name of the Father. Forgiveness, he is exalted with God's right hand a Prince, and a Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, *Act. 5. 31. This man, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down, &c.* namely, from this work of offering any more, his sacrifice being so acceptable, as that he hath taken away the guilt of his sins which were imputed to him, and hath obtained power to forgive the sins of the people, *Heb. 7. 27. & 10. 11, 12. He is ascended up on high, and hath led captivity captive, and hath received gifts* (of justification, forgiveness and spirit) in the man for men (as they come forth from Adam) yea for the rebellious also (which add rebellion unto their sin, *Job 34. 37.*) *Psal. 68. 18.* Herein the free gift, this grace in Christ exceeds the offence of the first man; the judgment was by one (offence) to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification, *Rom. 5. 16.* even of many offences that are distinct from that offence, and unto which men are not thereby necessitated merely; of many offences in which men sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression, *ver. 14.* through this man whom God raised again, and who saw no corruption, is preached the forgiveness of sins, even of such sins as they that believe this preaching are justified from; namely, from such sins as they could not be justified from by the Law of Moses for which it afforded or directed to, no sacrifice for a typical justification; to wit, rebellious, presumptuous sins, *Act. 13. 38, 39.* with *Numb. 15. 30, 31. The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, Mat. 9. 6.* and in him God is become a God gracious and merciful, pardoning iniquity, and transgression, and sin, *Rom. 3. 25. Heb. 10. 14, 18.* In him the Apostles had in the testimony to declare redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace, *Eph. 1. 7. Col. 1. 14.* Oh great consolation for us that have transgressed, and have rebelled, and have thereby procured such testimonies of displeasure, as in which

he hath been taking away faithful and eminent helpers in the Lord! Oh excellent object, and *medium* to be commended to, that we may in the incouragement of his grace in what he hath done, and is become, and hath received, come with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, forgiveness of our sin, and grace to help in time of need, *Heb. 4. 16.*

And he hath received the immeasurable fulness of the Holy Ghost, the spirit of grace, *Isa. 11. 1, 3. & 42. 1. Job. 3. 34.* he is full of grace and truth, *Joh. 1. 14. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. 3. 3. This is the record that God hath given us eternal life* (even the knowledge and favour of God, and fellowship with him) *and this life is in his Son, 1 Joh. 5. 10, 11.* all things are here ready, *Mat. 22. 43* durable riches and righteousness, a feast of fat things for all people, of fat things full of marrow, *Prov. 3. 13, 18. & 8. 18, 19. Isa. 25. 6.* he is become a fountain of life and living waters, to cool and refresh our thirsty souls, and to wash us from all our pollutions and defilements, *Zech. 13. 1. Psa. 26. 9. Jer. 2. 13.*

Yea, it discovers the great power, and authority, and dominion which he hath recovered into, and received in our nature, and for us: God hath given him power over all flesh, over all mankind; he is the Prince of the Kings of the earth, and hath power over all creatures, all power is given to him both in heaven and in earth, *Mat. 28. 18.* God hath given him dominion over the works of his hands in this lower part of his Creation, the which he gave to man in the first *Adam*, but by their seeking out inventions they came short of this glory of God which he had conferred upon them, *Gen. 1. 26, 28. Eccl. 7. 29. Rom. 3. 23.* but our Jesus hath redeemed this which was part of our possession, and which we had sold and aliened. And not only so, but he hath power over Angels, he hath obtained a more excellent name than they, even than the holy and elect Angels, they are now his, and are instructed to worship him, even all the Angels of God, *Heb. 1. 4, 6.* they are the Angels of the Son of man, sent forth and ordered by him, *Mat. 24. 30, 31. Heb. 1. 10, 14.* and his own right hand, and his holy arm hath given himself the victory over the evil Angels, he hath bound the strong man, spoiled principalities

palities, and powers, and God hath put all things under his feet, *Eph. 1. 20, 21. Psal. 98. 1.* This was that which was more darkly prophesied of by the Prophet; *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field (even the great and wild beasts, the fear of him is upon them) the fowl of the Air, and the fish of the Sea, and whatsoever passeth thorow the paths of the Sea, Psal. 8. 5, 8.* He hath the dominion over these, that he may give food to all flesh during his pleasure, and that he may preserve from the fury and rage of the wildest and strongest of them, that mens lives may be preserved while it is the day of his grace, and for the peculiar good of those that believe, *Job 5. 22, 23.* Yea, the Apostle citing that place in the Psalmist, and shewing it was spoken concerning our Jesus, doth also explicate it unto us, and shews that he hath obtained a more excellent and large dominion than over the works of God's hands here below; yea, that nothing, no person, or thing is exempted from being under his Lordship, except him who hath put all things under him, though this be not so gloriously manifested now, as it shall be in due time: *Thou hast set him over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet; for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him, Heb. 2. 7, 9.* Oh great grace toward mankind, and especially for the good of those that shall be heirs of salvation. Hence that admiration, *What is man that thou art mindful of him! Psal. 8. 4. Heb. 2. 6. & 1. 14.*

This is that grace in Christ as to the first branch of the testimony, even that he by vertue of his blood hath delivered us in himself from the guilt of our sins which occasioned the first breach, and from that so great a death, and hath obtained forgiveness of all our sins, all grace and truth into himself, and a great and glorious Lordship and authority.

And by vertue of what he hath done and hath received, he is become the one and only foundation, the living stone, and chief corner stone, the head of the corner, *1 Cor. 3. 11. 1 Pet. 2. 4, 6.* yea, to the disobedient the head of the corner, *1 Pet. 2. 7.* the Saviour of the world, *Job. 4. 42. 1 Job. 4. 14.* the way, the truth, and the life, *Job. 14. 6.* the only door of approach to God, by whom only we may come to the Fa-

then, *Ioh. 10. 7, 9.* the true light, the light of the world, *Ioh. 1. 9. &c. 8. 12.* the bread of life, and water of life, *Ioh. 6. 35.* the true vine, *Ioh. 15. 1.* he is beauty and glory, excellency and comeliness for our escape, *Isa. 4. 2.* the Lord and Christ, *Act. 2. 36.* a Prince and Saviour, *Act. 5. 31.* yea, in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him we are compleat, who is the head of all principality and power, *Col. 2. 9, 10.* *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?* *Psal. 106. 2, 3.* his love is that which passeth knowledge, *Eph. 3. 19.*

And great cause, and good ground have we to pray for our selves and one another, that God would strengthen us with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith (in what he hath done and is become) that we being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height (even of his grace) *Eph. 3. 16, 18.* where the excellency of this love and grace is set forth in like expressions, as is the unsearchableness of the Almighty, for God is love. See *Ioh. 11. 7, 9.* there we have these several dimensions spoken of, though in a contrary order.

The breadth of this grace is such, as that it is broader than the Sea, though that be famous for its breadth, and therefore called the great and wide Sea, *Psal. 104. 25.* yet he hath given to it, decree that the waters should not pass his commandment, *Prov. 8. 29.* there is an end of that, but his love is exceeding broad (and his commandment, his Gospel in which it is declared) this is more capacious, infinitely, exceedingly wide, who there-through hath in our nature obtained dominion now, and shall exercise it gloriously from Sea to Sea; he is that place of broad rivers and streams, and shall be so gloriously manifested, *Isa. 33. 21.* and they that from the excellency of his loving kindness, put their trust under the shadow of his wings, shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house, and he will make them drink of the river of his pleasures, (now in a first fruits of the Spirit, and hereafter in a full injoyment) for with him is the fountain of life, *Psal. 36. 7, 9. & 46. 4.*

As to its length it is longer than the earth, as to its duration and continuance, for it is everlasting, *Jer. 32. 3.* And he hath

hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, 2 *Thes.* 2. 16. and it is by vertue thereof that the earth and all the inhabitants thereof, which were dissolved by the sin of man, are upheld; he bears up the pillars thereof, upholds all things by the word of his power, *Psal.* 75. 3. *Heb.* 1. 3. whereby all the inhabitants of the earth are in him redeemed from the curse of the Law; and whereby there is peace on earth, good will towards men, and which extends in the vertue and fruit of it, to all the inhabitants of the earth in every age and generation, and that to a gracious end. Hence all the earth called upon to make a joyfull noise, to be thankful unto him, and blest his name, &c. *Psal.* 100. to look to him and be saved, *Isa.* 45. 21, 22.

The depth of it is deeper than hell, even that where-through he hath destroyed Satan in his first work, and is fitted and impowered to destroy him in his second, and will do it in due time; he hath spoiled principalities and powers; *Destruction and death say, we have heard the same thereof with our ears, Job* 28. 22. Satan had laid his plot very deep, and by his subtlety having beguiled our first Parents, and drawn them into the transgression, and so into the desert of curse and death, thought to have made them for ever necessarily alike miserable with himself; and indeed the condition into which he brought them, and they by listening to him brought themselves, was such, as they could never suffer this death, so as to overcome in suffering; no man could redeem his brother, &c. and yet the death must be suffered and overcome, or no mercy could be shewn to mankind; but now our God, and the Father in him, the man Christ Jesus hath counter-plotted and undermined him, and in what he thought to have dealt proudly, he was above him; in that very destruction in which he thought to have destroyed us for ever, is he taken and fallen; our Jesus hath through death destroyed him that had the power of death, even the Devil, and hath obtained the victory; and his triumphing Song is, *Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh hell, where is thy victory?* Death in him is swallowed up into victory, and abolished, and he hath overcome hell, and our-witted Satan; in the net which he laid for us, and into which we were fallen, is he himself taken: Oh infinite pity and love to man-ward, and through Christ

God gives us the victory, that we may rejoyce in his salvation, and in the name of our God lift up the banner, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 58. *Psal.* 20. 5. & 98. 1. & 47.

The height of it is the height of heaven, for there-through, and by vertue of what he hath done thereby, he being raised from the dead, hath offered himself a spotless sacrifice unto God through the eternal spirit, and is ascended far-above all heavens, into heaven it self, that he may fill and fulfil all things; he is gone up into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, and by means, and by vertue of what he hath done, there is peace in heaven, *Luke* 19. 38. When man had sinned, and brought themselves under the sentence of banishment, God's love and pity was toward them; but such was the holiness of God, and his truth, and justice, that there was no mercy to be shewed forth to mankind, until his justice was satisfied, his truth fulfilled, and his righteous Law answered; *For heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot, or tittle of the Law shall pass till all be fulfilled.* But now Jesus Christ becoming under the Law by the will of God, he bare our sins, and dyed our death, and is raised again, so as in him mercy and truth are met, righteousness and peace have kissed; truth is sprung out of the earth in his resurrection, and righteousness looks down from heaven, in all the streams of God's goodness and compassion to us; and now there is cause to sing, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest; he is ascended upon high, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty, in the heavens. Oh infinite love! Oh unsearchable riches of grace!

2. This word of his grace discovers his grace to us in what he is now doing to us from heaven, in the name and authority of the Father, and in the anointing of the holy Ghost: And in what he is doing in heaven for us with the Father; in both which he is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe, 1 *Tim.* 4. 10. his end in both, being, that he might bring us to God; his end in what he hath done for us in breaking down the middle wall of partition that was between God and us, and between Jew and Gentile, and having abolished in his flesh the enmity, it was, that he might reconcile both (Jew and Gentile) unto God in one body by the Cross, *Eph.* 2. 14, 16. His end in his having made peace, was, that

that he might reconcile all things, and so all men (as persons sometimes is included and meant in that expression, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 23.) Col. 1. 20. And indeed that his end was to reconcile all men, appears to be included in that expression, in that he immediately adds, *And you who were sometimes enemies, and alienated in your minds, &c. yet now hath he reconciled,* Col. 1. 20, 21. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. and so his end in what God hath now appointed Christ to, and in which he is faithful, is the same, not to condemn the world, but that through him the world might be saved; and the Apostle doth hereby demonstrate and prove the graciousness of God's heart towards all men, by shewing what he hath appointed Christ unto in his present work and office. *God, saith he, will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.* To evidence that, he saith; *For there is one God,* (namely, not only to distinguish him from all other who are called Gods, but to denote to us that he is one, not divided, hath not a secret will contrary to his revealed, but he is light, and in him is no darkness at all, and so he is the same, he hath manifested himself to be in abasing his Son to dye for us, and crowning him with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.) *And one Mediator,* (namely, as before, not only to distinguish him from all others that are called so, and so to signify that he is the one and only Mediator appointed by the one God; though that is true, and may be principally intended, but also to assure us that he is one, the same, *Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever,* Heb. 13. 8. And so in what he is appointed to, to day, he is one and the same with what he was yesterday, even the Saviour of the world, the anointed Saviour of men, while they are not wholly given up to, and become one with Satan, and reckoned fully of his seed, and for such in that consideration he was never a Saviour; and so he is one Mediator) *between God and men, the man Christ Jesus* (even he that had such infinite grace to all men, that) *he gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,* 1 Tim. 2. 4, 6. If God had not willed and desired that all men should be saved, he would never have appointed such a gracious Mediator between him and them, and such a faithful testimony: Now then to this end that men might be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth

truth in this day, and this in order unto their eternal salvation.

1. Jesus Christ is a testimony of God's graciousness to men in due time, even to all men as they come to years of capacity, that they might be reconciled, and their hearts turned to the Lord; the enmity that was in the state and condition of mankind, Jesus Christ hath already slain, and hath taken out of the way all that was in it contrary to us; but yet still men while abiding in their natural state, are enemies in their minds to God; there is a secret enmity and contrariety in their hearts to God, through that ignorance that is in them. Now then, that this may be purged out, and their minds turned to the Lord, Jesus Christ is seasonably by all means witnessing his, and his Fathers pity and love to them, and is by his goodness discovered moving to repentance, for it is the goodness of God leadeth to repentance, even those that are not led by it, *Rom. 2. 4, 5.* It is his love manifested and discerned that begets love to him again, *1 Job. 4. 7, 10, 19.* Grace is poured into the lips of Jesus Christ, *Psal. 45. 2.* and he is in some measure giving some witnessings of God's mercifulness and goodness to all; yea, to those that had not the Word and Oracles committed to them, as *Israel* after the flesh had: *He left not himself without witness* (of his propitioussness through a Mediator) *but gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness, Acts. 14. 17. & 17. 26, 27;* that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them; for the invisible things of him, from the Creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, even his mercy, goodness and wisdom, &c. That he is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, which whoever believes, having no more clear discovery, comes to God acceptably, *Rom. 1. 19, 21. Psal. 19. 1, 6. & 145. 8, 10. Heb. 11. 6.* The grace of God brings salvation to all men, *Tit. 2. 11.* even some discovery of the salvation Christ hath wrought and obtained in himself for them: So it is said, *wisdom*, even Jesus Christ, *cryeth without*, (without the pale of the professed Church, without, where are dogs, *Rev. 22. 15.*) *She useth her voice in the streets, she cryeth in the chief place of concourse, in the opening of the*

she gates, in the City she uttereth her words; namely, speaks of excellent things to them, and the opening of her lips are right things: She declares good things to them, the goodness and graciousness of God toward them; and right, true things also, that which is faithful and worthy of all acceptation, *Prov. 1. 20, 21.* with *Chap. 8. 1, 4, 6.* And so it is said, the Spirit of the Lord God is upon Jesus Christ, because the Lord hath anointed him to preach the Gospel, &c. and so to preach it as to comfort all that mourn, as distinguished from *Zions* mourners, even all that mourn, whatever be the occasion, *Isa. 61. 1, 2.* and without controversy he is without sin herein; he is faithful in what he is appointed to, yea not only faithful from the engagement and obligation of an appointment, but his own gracious heart and cordial affection to all, moves him so to be, for he is the Son of the Father in love. Hence that, *Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way, Psal. 25. 8, 9.* He is not simply upright; but good, gracious, and thence also upright; therefore will he teach such as are out of the way, even such as have missed the way, and mark, as distinguished from meek ones, and fearers of the Lord.

And in and with his witnessings of God's goodness, he is also faithfully reproving and convincing men of the sinfulness of their sin, and of the vanity of their idols; he is shewing unto them the emptiness and unprofitableness of all those things in which naturally they are seeking rest. So it is said, *Prov. 1. 21.* Wisdom uttereth her words, this is the first thing she doth; namely, speaks of excellent things, as before, and in and with this reproves: *How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning? and fools hate knowledge?* ver. 22. He is making gracious proclamation and invitation to every one that thirsteth, to come to the waters; and he that hath no money, no gracious frame or qualification, and therewith reproving them for, and convincing them of their folly and unreasonableness, in spending their money for what is not bread, and labouring for that which satisfieth not, *Isa. 55. 1, 3, & 41. 29.* with *Chap. 42. 1. Psal. 4. 2, 3. & 62. 8, 10. Prov. 8. 4, 10, 21, 32, 36. & 9. 1, 6.* All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. The true light doth

not

not simply reprove, but makes all things manifest, it discovers things in their right and proper colours, that men might flee from the things reprov'd; wherefore he saith, *Awake thou that sleepest* (that hast fellowship with men in their unfruitful works of darkness) *and arise from the dead*, (both from dead persons and things, forsake the foolish) *and Christ shall give thee light*, Eph. 5. 13, 14. Prov. 9. 6. It is the work and office of the Holy Ghost to reprove and convince the world of sin, because they believe not on Christ, of righteousness, and of judgment; and this he doth by glorifying Christ, and taking of his things, and shewing unto men, *John* 16. 8, 14, 15.

And together with this discovery of God's goodness to all in due time vouchsafed, and reproof of mens evils, and discovery of the sinfulness of their sin, and emptiness, and unprofitableness of their objects of rest and satisfying, in which in vain they seek what is not in them, Jesus Christ is also preventing men in due time with some capacity to behold what he is commending to them, and what he is condemning and faulting: *This is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, *Joh.* 1. 9. God hath put his Spirit upon him, and so furnished him, and as so furnished he hath given him to be a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, *Isa.* 42. 1, 7. Hence that, *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally to all men, and upbraids not*, *Jam.* 1. 5. *The poor and deceitful man meet together, the Lord lighteneth both their eyes*, *Prov.* 29. 13. Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the great manifestation of God's goodness to men, and the giver of light to men; *Upon whom doth not his light arise?* *Joh.* 8. 12. *Job* 25. 3. He doth seasonably open mens eyes, and unstop their ears, that they might behold what he is presenting, and hear what he is speaking; and is also turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God (even Jews and Gentiles) that they might turn to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and so by his Spirit preaching, not to their outward ears only, but to their spirits, who still continued disobedient, *Act.* 26. 18. *1 Pet.* 3. 18, 20. Not only bowing and moving them by a moral swasion (as some speak) but giving some supernatural light, and power unto them, as in his hand is power, and might, and strength, so in

In his hand it is to give strength unto all, and he is faithful hereto in due time, *1 Chron. 29. 12. The bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world, unto the dead world, who are dead in sins and trespasses, John 6. 33. and he so cometh down (in such manner, and to such end) that a man (any man) may eat thereof and not dye, ver. 50. He is not only calling to men, but also stretching forth his hand unto them in the means vouchsafed, Prov. 1. 24. And indeed otherwise men could not come unto him; No man can come to Christ, except the Father who hath sent Christ draw him, Job. 6. 44. they have no sufficiency of themselves, as of themselves, to think any thing that is good; they have no light in their understanding, no freedom of will, no inclination or affection to anything that is spiritually good; in them, as of them, and from Adam dwelleth no good thing; but now that they might come, he is vouchsafing the cords of a man, some demonstrations of his goodness through a Mediator, and is drawing them with the cords of a man, with the bands of love, and is to them (that refuse to return) as he that taketh off the yoke on their jaws, and layes meat unto them, *Hos. 11. 3, 5. Jesus Christ draws all men unto him, even such as break his bands, and cast away his cords from them, and despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance, &c. Job. 12. 31, 32. Psal. 2. 3. Jer. 5. 5. Rom. 2. 4, 5.**

And it is mens refusing their own mercies for lying vanities, and neglecting and abusing such capacities given them, that is their iniquity which is now imputed to them, according to the rule of the glorious Gospel. Men were not capable of adding rebellion to their sin, if God were not thus preventing them with his goodness; for this is that which renders them rebellious, when they are disobedient to God who is stretching forth his hands to them, that is, who is even beseeching them to be reconciled, and giving them some light and power of his Spirit that they might turn, and when also they are gainsaying and contradicting, and so rebelling against the light extended. Compare *Isa. 65. 2. with Rom. 10. 21. Men are therefore said to be a rebellious people, because they have eyes to see and see not, and ears to hear and hear not, Ezek. 12. 3. Jer. 5. 21, 23. Mat. 13. 15. This is*

the condemnation (viz. the cause of condemnation, the condemning sin, and that which makes all sins condemnable, according to the rule of the Gospel) *that light is come into the world* (some discovery and manifestation of God's goodness afforded, and some capacity to behold it given) *and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil* (so discovered to be by the light) *Joh. 3. 17, 19.* And certainly no man shall be condemned to a second death, but for refusing the grace of God that brings salvation to save them in due time, and persisting therein. As our Saviour saith to the Jews: *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak or excuse for their sin, Joh. 15. 22.*

And this is great consolation to us, that Jesus Christ is appointed to be, and is the light of the world, for he is good and upright; any man is unmeet for this, though he were never so willing, yet he is unable to speak to all men; yea, the spirit is not put upon them to give forth or dispense to others; this glory he will not give to another besides Jesus Christ, nor his praise to graven images, *Isa. 42. 6, 8.* It is true, they are instruments in his hand, and though they have no sufficiency of themselves as of themselves to do any good, yet their sufficiency is of God, and Jesus Christ hath promised to be alwayes with his people in their faithful ministration, even to the end of the world, *Mat. 28. 18, 20.*

But however unable men are, yet seeing God hath given him to be a light of the Gentiles, that he should be for salvation to the ends of the earth, he will not fail, nor be discouraged; and this grace of his, and of the Father in him, is discovered to us in this word of his grace.

2. He is also the Mediator between God and men, making intercession for transgressors, *Isa. 53. 12.* that is to say, when men after some manifestation of God's goodness afforded, leading to repentance; and some capacity given to behold it, and men strengthened to turn from darkness to light, yet they are found rebelling against the light, and grace of God vouchsafed, and provoke new wrath; now that men might not be presently cut off, and bound over to the wrath to come, according to their deserts, he is appearing in heaven for them, that God may be still patient toward them, and not deal with them according to their sins: It is generally found with men that

that they are sinning against the grace of God bringing salvation to them; the Lord (after means used, and mercies afforded) looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God: *They are all gone aside, they are together become filthy, there is none that doth good, no not one*, Plal. 14. 2, 3. they are not believing God in what he is testifying to them of his goodness in and through Jesus Christ, or however, not in what he is therewith testifying of them, their works, wayes and idols. And *he that believeth not the Son is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*; that is, not so believed as to love the light more than darkness, *Joh. 3. 18, 19.* And this is generally the reason of mens refusing and rebelling against the light, not simply because it discovers good of God, and declares his graciousness and desire of mens good, but because it testifies of the world that the works thereof are evil, *Joh. 7. 7.* even their best works as well as their worst works: *He that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved and discovered*, *Joh. 3. 20.* *Joh. 23. 13, 17.* and for this men are condemned, they do deserve, and are under the sentence of the wrath to come; this is the sin of the world, and for which it shall be condemned, so persisting. Now Jesus Christ in his present work is presenting himself in the vertues of his sacrifice once offered, and alwayes acceptable before the Father for such as these, during his good pleasure, that judgment may not speedily be executed upon them, but patience and forbearance may be exercised, further means used, and spirit sent forth in the means to open their eyes, and to turn them from their disobedience to the wisdom of the just; he is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, even their sin of unbelief, for this is the sin of the world, *Joh. 1. 29.* with *Chap. 16. 8, 9.* that is, he in his present Mediation so takes it away, that God's wrath may not presently break forth to cut men off in their sins; and so in a lower sense he procures forgiveness for them; not such as they receive who come unto God by Christ, for their sins are blotted out in heaven, but the sins of these are retained in heaven against them while they continue in them, and the wrath of God abides on them, *Joh. 3. 18, 36.* but he procures sparing, and further space of re-

pentance, *Luk. 13. 34. Rev. 2. 21.* and is also giving unto them grace of repentance; and to such an end he is said to be and is the propitiation, not only for their sins who have him as their Advocate with the Father, but also for the sins of the whole world, who lye in wickedness, 1 *Job. 2. 1, 2.* with Chap. 5. 19. Hence it is that God is so slow to anger, and that he saith to men, to day, after so long a time, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; yea, that he waits so long on such as love their simplicity, delight in scorning, and hate knowledge, *Prov. 1. 22. Isa. 43. 14. 2 Pet. 3. 15.* A type of whom was *Moses*, who was the Mediator of the first Testament. When that people had greatly sinned, so as God threatened to destroyed them, then *Moses* his chosen stood in the breach before him to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them, *Psal. 106. 23. Heb. 3.* and so prevalent is he in his Mediation, that God alwayes gives to him his hearts desire, and with-holds nor from him the requests of his lips; he did oft-times hear *Moses*, but once when he request somewhat for himself, the Lord said unto him, let it suffice thee, speak no more to me of this matter, and would not grant him his desire; but God never turns away the face of this his anointed one, but hears him alwayes, *Job. 11. 41, 42.* And (as before is intimated) his end in making intercession it is, not only that mens lives might be a little longer continued, much less is it that he may aggravate their condemnation (though it men still refuse and rebel, their condemnation will be hereby aggravated, and God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalpe of such as go on still in their trespasses, *Psal. 68. 18. 21.*) but that they which live, and have their lives prolonged, might live, not to themselves, but to him who dyed for them, and rose again, *2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.* and therefore while he intercedes for further sparing, it is that he may dig about (by his corrections and chastenings, in which he hath a gracious end while it is called to day, *Job 7. 17, 18. & 33. 19, 29.*) and dung them, with his mercies and goodnes to lead them to repentance, as *Luk. 13. 6; 8.* So also the Apostle signifies in that motive and argument he layes down, to move the *Corinthians* not to receive the grace of God in vain; for he (to wit, the Father) saith (to Christ) I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of sal-
 tion,

tion have I succoured thee. I say, therein is signified, that while God hears Christ, and that is all the time he is mediating, he is also using means, and succouring him in his ministration, that men might receive the grace of God to purpose; and so all this while, it is an accepted time, and day of salvation, in which men may seek the Lord, and he will be found, *2 Cor. 6. 1, 2. Isa. 55. 1, 6.* And hence the Apostle Peter, instructs to account the long-suffering of our Lord to be salvation; that is, not only an evidence and witness of that salvation wrought and compleated in the person of our Lord, though it is so also, *Psal. 68. 18, 20.* nor only that during that time of his exercising long-suffering, he is saving them from destruction; but also to signifie what the end of our Lord in procuring it for us, and exercising it toward us is, namely, *He is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish,* (no not those scoffers that walked after their own lusts, and said, *Where is the promise of his coming?* while it is called to day) *but that all should come to repentance,* *2 Pet. 3. 4, 9, 15. Prov. 1. 23* for he hath no pleasure, none at all, neither secret nor revealed in the everlasting destruction of men, while the day of his grace and patience continues, and that is while Jesus-Christ mediates, and that is while God is calling men by any means, and stretching forth his hand, which he doth while he calls. *Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should dye, saith the Lord God? and not that he should return from his wayes and live,* *Ezek. 18. 23. & 33. 10, 11. Isa. 49. 8, & 50. 1, 2.* and therefore when men have so provoked God as that they have deserved to be presently cut off, and he is threatning to bring upon them such judgments as in which many would have their lives taken away, and so, dying in their sins, be sealed up to the wrath to come; because he hath no pleasure concurring with their destruction, while there may be hope, he is through the Mediation of Jesus deferring his anger, and waiting that he may be gracious, and exalting himself that he may have mercy upon such, *Isa. 30. 8, 18.* such his grace to man-ward while it is called to day.

But now in his present work and offices, he is especially the Saviour of them that believe, the Apostle and High-Priest of their profession, to whom he is more abundantly gracious, he giveth grace to the humble. He.

He forgives them their iniquities that come unto God by him, and retaineth them no longer in heaven against them, but justifieth them freely by his grace, and ever lives to make intercession for them, to take away their manifold mixtures, weaknesses and infirmities, and is therefore able to save them to the uttermost, yea, they are justified in believing by him from all things from which they could not be justified by the Law of *Moses*, even from rebellious iniquities; and to them he imputes righteousness without works, and they are made accepted in the beloved, *Heb. 7. 25. Aſ. 13. 39. Tit. 3. 7. Rom. 4. 5; 7.* yea, God is daily and continually the just fier of him that believeth in Jesus through him as the propitiatory, *Rom. 3. 22, 25, 26.* and so, *To them he gives power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name,* and they are the subjects of peculiar grace and favour: *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God, even such as were sometimes the children of wrath, even as others,* 1 *Joh. 3. 1. Eph. 2. 3.* Jesus Christ loves them with the same manner of love as wherewith the Father loves him, and the Father loves them with such manner of love as wherewith he loves his Son Jesus Christ, *Joh. 15. 9. & 17. 23.* even with a delightful and well pleased love; yea therefore he loveth them, because they have loved Jesus Christ, and have believed that he came forth from God, *Joh. 14. 21, 23. & 16. 27.*

And because they are sons, he sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, to them he pours forth his Spirit, and makes known his words, *Gal. 4. 6. Prov. 1. 23.* He gives unto them the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of Christ, opening and enlightning the eyes of their understandings, that they may know what is the hope of his calling, &c. *Eph. 1. 17, 20.* And this he doth, not because of any perfection of their coming to God by Christ, but from his own goodness he is pleased to make and repute them as his people, and to favour them with such favour. Hence the Psalmist ascribes it principally to the graciousness of the Lord, that he still and further teacheth them, and makes known his words: *Good and upright is the Lord, therefore the meek he will guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way; and the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his*

his Covenant (his Son whom he hath given for a Covenant of the people, and in whom all the promises of God are yea, and Amen, *Isa.* 42. 6. *2 Cor.* 1. 20.) *Psal.* 25. 8, 14. He gives them his good Spirit to guide them into all truth, to teach them all things, and bring all things to remembrance which Christ hath said, and so he gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding, *Job.* 34. 27. *Eccl.* 1. 13. *Dan.* 2. 21. And by his thus giving the Spirit to them, and opening the testimony of Jesus, and therein glorifying Christ, he is still, and further baptizing them by this holy Spirit, making them clean, and washing them with the washing of water by the Word, from the errors and pollutions of the world into Jesus Christ, *Job.* 15. 3. *Mat.* 3. 11. *Eph.* 5. 25, 26. *1 Cor.* 6. 10, 11. strengthening them there through to mortifie the deeds of the body, *Rom.* 8. 13. giving this as a spirit of adoption into their hearts, a spirit of grace and supplication, *Zech.* 12. 10. a spirit of boldness and confidence to come unto God as their Father, and cry *Abba*, to draw nigh to him by the blood of Jesus, through that new and living way consecrated through the veil, the flesh of Christ, he being also the great High Priest over the house of God; and so to come with boldness to the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, *Heb.* 10. 19, 22. *Rom.* 8. 15. *Gal.* 4. 6. *Heb.* 4. 16. and to teach them what to pray for as they ought, both what things to desire, and so what to pray for first, and especially, namely, the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof; and things more directly thereto appertaining, and other things with submission to his will, and upon what account, and in what encouragement, and to what end to seek them, to wit, in the name of Christ, and that God in all things may be glorified, *Rom.* 8. 26, 27. to fulfil in them the righteousness of the Law, and fill them with the fruits of righteousness, and so to conform them to Christ, that their soul may be as a watered garden, *Rom.* 8. 4. *Gal.* 5. 16, 22. *Eph.* 4. 9, 10. *Isa.* 58. 11. to teach them to answer adversaries and opposers, and that they may contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints, *Luk.* 12. 11, 12. *Eccl.* 1. 14, 15. to anoint them, and give grace to them, even some gracious gift for the good of men, and growth of the Church,

Church, that they may grow up together by that which every joint supplieth, *Eph. 4. 7. 1 Cor. 12. 7.* and so makes them a royal Priesthood to shew forth his praises, *1 Pet. 2. 5, 9,* yea, strengthens them through his Spirit, to wait for the hope of his righteousness by faith, in purging away their transgressions, subduing their iniquities, fighting their battels, (he being the Captain of their salvation) perfecting all their works; and event to look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus to eternal life, *Gal. 5. 5. Psal. 138. 7, 8. Isa. 26. 12.*

He is their Advocate with the Father to plead their cause, to receive their suits, to make their spiritual sacrifices acceptable, taking away the iniquity of their holy things, that they may come with acceptance upon his Altar, and so to give answers of peace and gracious returns. He is the High Priest of their profession, and so he is not of others; their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another God, Rock, Mediator, High-Priest, their drink-offerings of blood will he not offer, but he offers their sacrifices that come to God by him, and perfumes them with the vertues and odours of his sacrifice, *Psal. 16. 4. Job. 14. 13. 1 Pet. 2. 5. 1 Job. 2. 1. Rev. 8. 3, 5. Heb. 13. 15, 16.*

His eyes, unto whom all things are naked and opened, are alwayes upon them to preserve them from evil, to preserve their souls, *2 Thes. 3. 3.* they are alwayes upon the righteous, to order his providences as may be good, and to deliver them from the will of their enemies, and he is caring for them; and will preserve them that none shall pluck them out of his hand, *Job. 10. 27, 28. Psal. 33. 18. 1 Pet. 5. 5, 6, 7.*

Such is his grace to them, that when need is, he is chastening them for their profit, that they may be more partakers of his holiness, *Heb. 12. 9, 11. The Lord tryeth the righteous* (out of love to them, and faithfulness to Christ Jesus, *Psal. 89. 28, 33.*) *But the wicked, and him that loveth violence his soul hateth;* and therefore he is not so trying them, *Psal. 11. 5.* And oh that none of them whom he is so chastening, may forget that consolation in Christ which speaks to them as to children, that they may not despise his chastenings, nor faint when rebuked of him, *Heb. 12. 5, 8. Prov. 3. 11, 12.* And in those chastenings they have a merciful and faithful High-Priest to consider, who himself hath suffered being tempted, and

and therefore is able to succour them that are tempted, *Heb.* 2. 17, 18. & 3. 1. & 4. 15, 16. one who pities them as a father pities his children, and therefore chastens them as a man chasteneth his Son, *Psal.* 103. 13. *Deut.* 8. 5. with great tenderness; and in measure he debateth with them, and with the temptation will make a way of escape, that they may be able to bear, *Isa.* 27. 8, 9. *1 Cor.* 10. 13. and though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies, *Lam.* 3. 31, 32. and cause all things to work together for good to them that love God, *Rom.* 8. 28. and all these temptations and trials of their faith shall appear to praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Christ, *1 Pet.* 1. 6, 7. they shall see and acknowledge his grace and faithfulness in nurturing them in this day to so gracious an end, that they might not be condemned with the world, *1 Cor.* 11. 32. *Prov.* 23. 14. yea, now while walking in the light of the Lord, they are acknowledging his faithfulness in correcting, and giving thanks to him because of his righteous judgments, *Psal.* 119. 63, 68, 75.

Yea, he will in their seeking first the kingdom of God; and unto that, add unto them all other things; and so what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewith they shall be clothed; he will give unto them food and raiment, such provision hath he made in his great and precious promises for their encouragement, that their conversation may be without covetousness and carefulness, and he is faithful who hath promised, as is wonderfully manifested in the Cross of Christ, *Mat.* 6. 33. *Heb.* 13. 5, 6. *Psal.* 34. 9, 10. yea, he is a Sun and a shield, and will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly (and therefore) O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee, *Psal.* 84. 11, 12.

3. This word of his grace discovers his grace to us in what he will do, and that, 1. To those righteous ones whom he gathers to himself now by death, and before he appears. 2. And to all of them hereafter, when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven.

1. To those righteous ones who dye in the Lord, his goodness extends so to them that it is far better with them, than when at home in the body, though for such to have abiden

in the flesh till they had finished their days, who are cut off in the midst of them, had been more needful for the survivors of that body, that their rejoycing might have been more abundant in Christ Jesus, *Phil. 1. 23, 26.* yet their condition is more excellent than any of the Saints here, for his grace is more abundant to them; according to what the Psalmist speaking in the person of, and concerning Christ, signifies: *My goodness* (namely Christ's goodness and grace) *extends not to thee* (not to his Father, it adds nothing to him, for he is infinitely perfect, it extends not to him to give any thing to him, or to advantage him) *but to the Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight,* *Psal. 16. 2, 3.* Surely by the excellent ones, as distinguished from the Saints that are in the earth, is meant, those that dye in, or according to the faith, and they are more excellent than those of that body that are here continued.

They are free from sinning against God, *Gal. 4. 29.* and to are taken away from the evil that here was present with them, *Isa. 57. 1.* While they were here they had sin dwelling in them, and when they would do good, evil was present with them; when their hearts were set to seek after wisdom in the knowledge of Christ, this sin was molesting them, and seeking to divert them, that they might not consider, but let slip the things they had heard, that the word might be unprofitable to them; or to cause them to take offence at the reproofs of institution? Or, when to will was present with them, and they by the grace of God fixed to promote the things of Christ in word and conversation, it was present, moving them to ask counsel of their covetousness, or to seek after praise of men, and to be desirous of vain glory, &c. but now they are freed from that. In this present world, and while they were in it, they had ungodliness and worldly lusts in themselves to be alwayes denying, *Ti. 2. 11, 12.* but they shall then each one walk in his uprightness before him, as their blessedness, *Isa. 57. 2.* and that they shall then, when absent from the body, be delivered from the indwelling and molestation of sin, may be signified by that of the Apostle, *Oh wretched man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* *Rom. 7. 27, 24.* as implying, that when he should be delivered from this body of death, which is dead
by

by reason of sin, *Rom. 8. 10.* he should then be delivered from those troubles and continual combats that here he was greatly exercised withal; the spirits of those just men are then made perfect, *Heb. 12. 23.* and their bodies sleep in Jesus, &c. shall be raised in the resurrection of the just, *Zech. 9. 11, 12.*

They are free from the temptations of Satan, and men, which here they were exposed to, and from those vexations wherewith their righteous souls were vexed by the filthy conversation of the wicked, in seeing, and hearing from day to day their unlawful deeds. The Lord knoweth how to deliver (and by this means will deliver) the godly out of temptation; *2 Pet. 2. 7, 9.* the hour of temptation comes to try them that dwell upon the earth, from which now after a peculiar manner they are delivered, *Rev. 3. 10.* God doth set them in safety from those that here would have ensnared them. While here, and all the time they were in this present world, they had ungodliness and worldly lusts in others also to deny, and abstain from, and no way to be freed from their temptations and vexations, though they might be preserved from the evil; but when they are no more in the world they are delivered from those inticements and griefs; so much the Apostle signifies; I wrote unto you not to company with fornicators, yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, &c. for then must ye needs go out of the world, implying, that when they should be no more in it, they should no more have such occasions of temptation or vexation, *1 Cor. 5. 10.*

They have now rest given to them from the dayes of adversity, till the pit be digged for the wicked, and so from those great judgments wherewith God will punish the world, the influences whereof will cause trembling of the belly, and quivering of the lips, and rottenness in the bones of the surviving righteous ones, though they may still rejoyce in the Lord, yea, and at the sight of the coming to pass hereof lift up their heads, because their redemption hasteneth, *Hab. 3. 1, 16, 18.* *Psal. 94. 12, 13.* from the grief and exercise hereby occasioned these are free; he shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, *Isa. 37. 2.* they are taken from the evil to come, *ver. 1.* Hence that, *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, &c. Hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until*

the indignation be overpast; for behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, *Isa.* 26. 20, 21.

They are free from all their labours and services, which, while here, occasioned trouble and weariness to them; there is no work in the grave where they are, *Ecc.* 9. 10. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, Rev.* 14. 13. This the Apostle reckons amongst his infirmities, and those things which occasioned exercise to him, that he was in journeyings often, in weariness and painfulness, in labours often, *2 Cor.* 11. 23, 26, 27. and they are freed from great grief which here they were exposed to in seeing so little fruit of their labours amongst men, yea that those that listened to their doctrine, and were hearers of it, were not yet doers of it, that they were so little gathered from among the Heathen; and that some of them though they profess to know God, yet in works deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate, *Ti.* 1. 16. that such were still walking in pride, covetousness, or the more gross lusts of the flesh; that they even laboured in vain, and spent their strength for nought and in vain; that though men received the love of the truth, yet not so as to be saved by it, this was matter of sadness, and even an heart-breaking to them, and indeed that whereby God himself is broken, *Ezek.* 6. 9, this was matter of wailing and complaint to them, that they have been like a woman with child that draweth near the time of her delivery; they have been with child, they have been in pain, they have wrought (little or) no deliverance in the earth, &c. *Isa.* 26. 17, 18. Now they rest from this, *Isa.* 57. 2.

They are free from all persecutions in words, gestures or actions, they are hid in the secret of God's presence from the pride of man, and kept secretly in a pavillion from the strife of tongues, *Psa.* 31. 19, after the body is dead their enemies have no more that they can do, *Luk.* 12. 4. there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest; there the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor, *Joh* 3. 17, 19, The reproaches, laughers, scorn, and persecutions that here they met with, did seem to be grievous to them, as to what they themselves thereby in-
dured,

dured, *Psal. 69. 20.* as well as also as to their enemies, it caused great grief to them, rivers of waters run down their eyes, and they were troubled in spirit, because men kept not God's Laws, but persecuted them wrongfully, and were enemies to them for following the thing that was good, *Job. 13. 21.* this caused heaviness to them, to consider the greatness of their iniquity and severity of the judgment they were pulling upon their heads by such iniquities.

They are now out of the danger of miscarrying, and from henceforth there is laid up for them a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give unto them in that day, *1 Tim. 4. 8.* there is now a great gulf fixed, and no passing from one place to another, no altering of their condition, no not for ever, *Luk. 16. 26. Eccl. 11. 3.* Now abiding in Christ they are safe, he that abideth in him sinneth not, transgresseth not, and misseth not the mark; but if a man abide not in him, he is cast forth; its possible that such as have begun to run well may turn aside from him that called them into the grace of Christ, *1 Joh. 3. 6. Gal. 1. 6. &c. 5. 7.* but then no change of their state, and their works follow them, all their work of faith, and labour of love, and patience in tribulation, these shall not be forgotten, but be recompensed in the resurrection of the just, *Luk. 14. 14.*

And now they are present with the Lord, as here they were not when at home in the body, seeing and beholding in their spirits the glorified and glorious body of our Lord Jesus, and then walking by sight, as now they do not, for they are more excellent; and therefore sorrow not for them as those that have no hope, *Isa. 57. 2. 2 Cor. 5. 6, 7, 8. Phil. 1. 23, 24.*

2. It discovers his grace to all of this body, both in soul and body, when Jesus Christ shall appear the second time without sin to salvation, *Heb. 9. 28.* in which his Israel shall be saved: with an everlasting salvation, they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end, *Isa. 45. 17.* this is that which *Peter* exhorts the believers to hope for: *Gird up, saith he, the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 1 Pet. 1. 13.* and this he calls the grace of life, *1 Pet. 3. 7.* and indeed that eternal life they shall then inherit gloriously, it is not wages, as death is of sin, but a gift of grace, *Rom. 6. 23.*

Zach.

Zeck. 4. 6. And this grace that shall then be brought to them is so exceeding great, as none here fully knows. Hence that admiration, *Oh! how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men, Psal. 31. 19.* since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear (by any thing they have heard in any declaration vouchsafed) neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him, *Isa. 64. 4.* These things were indeed revealed to the Apostles by the Spirit as in former times they were not, and so they have declared them; and yet they did but see in part, and therefore Prophecie in part, *1 Cor. 2. 9, 10.* with *Chap. 13. 9.* This grace is inexpressibly, yea inconceivably great, it hath not entred into the heart of man; and much less can I declare it in order, who have seen so little of it in the testimony, but yet as I may be helped I shall speak a little of it.

1. They that sleep in Jesus shall be raised, and the living changed, when Christ shall descend from heaven, and so before the rest of the dead, *1 Thes. 4. 16. 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. As in Adam all dye, so in Christ shall all be made alive;* but every man in his own order (not all at once) Christ the first fruits (he is risen from the dead already, and is become the foundation of the resurrection from, and of the dead, for if he be not raised, there could be no resurrection; and he shall be the effecter of it, and is become the first fruits of them that are fallen asleep in him especially; like to whom shall be that lump, *Rom. 11. 16.*) afterward they that are Christ's at his coming; then (or afterward, as *ver. 5.*) the end (namely, after the end of the thousand years of Christ's and his Saints reigning on the earth, there will be the second and general resurrection, when the dead small and great, shall be raised and stand before God, *Rev. 20. 7, 12, 13, 15.*) *1 Cor. 15. 23, 24.* So the Apostle *John* saith, *I saw,* (to wit, in vision) the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished, *Rev. 20. 4, 6. Isa. 26. 19.*

2. In

1. In their being raised they shall be saved wholly from all sin, death, and other enemies. And so,

From sin, he shall present them to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, *Eph. 5. 27.* they shall then be sanctified wholly in spirit, soul, and body, and be presented blameless before the throne of his glory, *1 Thes. 5. 23, 24. & 3. 13. Jude 24.* No sin in them, but as the first fruits, Jesus Christ, is holy, so will be the lump then compleatly; nor any imputation of sin to them, or remembrance of sin upon them, their sins shall then be compleatly blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send us Jesus who now is preached to us. *There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit;* but yet there is sin in them, and if any of them say they have no sin, they deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them; yea, and there is some remembrance of sin upon them: And as to those that dye in the Lord, though their spirits are made perfect, as before, yet there is some fruit of sin upon them; but then he will cast all their sins into the depth of the Sea; their sins, and their iniquities he will remember no more, *Alt. 3. 19. Heb. 10. 16, 17. Mic. 7. 19. Jer. 50. 19, 20.* And this further appears, in that they shall be raised out of, and delivered for ever.

From death, and all its fruits, this was the wages of sin, *Rom. 6. 23. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, Rom. 5. 12, 14.* And, now the body is dead because of sin, *Rom. 8. 10.* And it is appointed to man, the whole kind, once to dye, though all shall not sleep in death; yea, the bodies of those just men generally whose spirits are made perfect, sleep in the dust, they are prisoners, though prisoners of hope, and so they are in the graves: But he will open their graves, and cause them to come out of their graves, and their bodies shall be fashioned into the likeness of Christ's glorious body, *Phil. 3. 20.* Now they are corruptible, have the seeds of corruption and principles of mortality; they are perishing, decaying bodies, and we may (with him) say to corruption, *Thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister, Job 17. 14.* We must needs all dye, and those that sleep in death, their bodies return to dust; but they shall be raised incorruptible,

corruptible, no more to return to corruption; this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality. That which is now dishonourable, and of which we are ashamed, for sin brought in shame, and therefore need cloathing and covering, that the shame of our nakedness appear not, and which is sown in dishonour, a vile, loathsome carcass, shall be raised in glory, even with the glory of the Lord upon it, *Mat. 13. 43.* They shall no more need this vile cloathing, but they shall then be clothed with the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of righteousness. That which is now weak at best, and subject to many infirmities, weaknesses and sicknesses, destitute of that health and strength at first created in; and so sown in weakness (no life, no strength in it to move itself, and even like the beasts; for that which befallerth the sons of men befallerth beasts, even one thing befallerth them; as the one dyeth, so dyeth the other, &c. *Ecc. 3. 19.*) shall be raised in power; be strong and freed from all weakness and diseases. That which is now a natural body, which we received by natural propagation, and was here nourished with natural meat and drink, by the word of God; and is sown a natural body, shall be raised a spiritual body; they shall be the sons of God then as to their bodies, being the children of the resurrection; and then they shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more, they shall be so spiritualized, that they shall be like to, and equal with the Angels, not hindered by any obstacles; they shall bear the image of the heavenly, and so they will be more excellent than man in his first creation; and now freed from all sickness, pain and grief; these inhabitants shall no more say they are sick, for their sins shall be forgiven them, *1 Cor. 15. 43, 49. Luk. 20. 35, 36. Isa. 49. 10. &c. 33. 24. Rev. 21. 3.* Christ shall then present them to himself a glorious Church not having wrinkle, no fruit, or remembrance of affliction, or grief upon them, *Eph. 5. 27. Job 16. 8.* but the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon them; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory, 1 Cor. 15. 53, 55.* they shall be freed and delivered for ever from the first death, and shall not go into the second; blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, *Rev. 20. 6.* they shall not

be condemned with the world in that everlasting fire, which was not at first prepared for mankind, but for the Devil and his angels, into which all that have been incensed against, and continued disobedient to Jesus Christ shall be cast; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death; *Rev.* 2. 11.

Then they shall be delivered and saved from all their enemies, and from all their deceits and troubles; God shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence, *Psal.* 72. 14.

From deceit, God shall then bruise Satan under their feet, as he is already bruised under the feet of the Captain of our salvation; for during the thousand years reign of Christ, and his Saints, he shall be bound, so as not to deceive the Nations all that time; and when the thousand years are expired, he shall be loosed a little season out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the Nations; he shall not then have liberty given him to deceive the Camp of the Saints, much less the beloved City, and presently after he shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, *Rev.* 20. 1, 3, 7, 10. into the holy City, new Jerusalem, shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or a lye, *Rev.* 21. 27. & 22. 15. Now they have temptations from Satan and men, though yet in hearing Christ's voice and following him, none shall pluck them out of his hands; neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, &c. shall be able to separate them, that love God, from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, *Joh.* 10. 27, 29. *Rom.* 8. 38, 39. but yet Satan is trying and endeavouring all means to corrupt from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus, and by letting slip the things heard, and listening to Satan, it's possible that a man may be intangled and overcome (there being sin in believers also that is always working deceitfully) as appears by the many admonitions given to believers, and jealousies of the Apostles concerning them, and some instances in Scripture recorded, &c. *1 Thes.* 3. 5. *Gal.* 1. 6, 7. & 5. 3, 5. & 6. 1. *2 Cor.* 11. 1, 3. *Heb.* 2. 1, 3. & 4. 1. & 10. 23, 29. but then, as they have no sin within them, so none without them shall tempt them any more: And herein their condition is more excellent than was Adam's and mankind's in him in the

first Creation; for though then God made man upright, yet there was a tempter permitted to tempt him, and through his subtilty did beguile him, he not keeping in believing mindfulness the word of God, but listening to the lye of the serpent.

And then they shall be delivered from violence also, he will give to them then rest from all their troubles, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, *2 Thes. 1. 7, 8.* Somewhat of this was typically enjoyed by Solomon before he departed from the Lord, according as God promised; the Lord gave him rest on every side, so that there was neither adversary nor evil occurrent, *1 Chron. 22. 9. 1 King. 5. 4.* But behold a greater than Solomon is here: There were then enemies in being, but now there shall be no more a pricking bryar unto the house of Israel, nor a grieving thorn, &c. *Ezek. 28. 24. Psal. 72.* Violence shall no more be heard in the Land, wasting, nor destruction within thy borders, but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, &c. and the dayes of thy mourning shall be ended; he will then destroy them that have destroyed the earth; and precious shall be the blood of his Saints, for he will take vengeance on those that have slain them, and been enemies to them, *Isa. 60. 12, 20. & 63. 1, 4.* with the assurance of this he strengthens the weak hands, and feeble knees, viz. that he, their God will come with vengeance, God with a recompence (for the Lord God of recompences will surely requite all the injuries done to his Saints) he will come and save them, *Isa. 35. 3, 4. Jer. 50. 27, 28. & 51. 56.* He will then bind their Kings in chains, and their Nobles in fetters of iron, and his people shall have an hand with him therein, to execute upon them the vengeance written; this honour have all his Saints, *Psal. 149. 4, 9.* Those righteous ones that are taken away by death do enter into peace, and are freed from oppression, but yet their blood is not avenged, but they cry with a loud voice, how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth; for this they wait; it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, &c. *Rev. 6. 9, 11.* but then he will thoroughly plead their cause; shall not God avenge his own elect

elect which cry unto him day and night? I tell you he will avenge them speedily, *Luke 18. 7, 8.* vengeance is his, and he will repay, *Rom. 12. 19. Rev. 11. 18.* their eye shall then see their desire upon their enemies, *Psal. 92. 11. & 111. 8, 10.* in righteousness shall they then be established; they shall be far from oppression, for they shall not fear, and from terror, for it shall not come near them, *Isa. 54. 7, 8, 13, 14.* then he will completely and gloriously bless his people with peace, and they shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace, *Psal. 29. 11. & 37. 11.*

3. They when thus raised and freed from all evil, shall be ever with the Lord, in companionship with him; the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord, *1 Thes. 4. 15, 17.* he will then come and receive them to himself, that where he is, they may be also, *Job. 14. 1, 3.* This is his will concerning them, that those the father hath given unto him should be with him where he is, *Job. 17. 14.* The tabernacle of God, even Jesus Christ in his personal body, shall then be with them, and he will dwell with them, *Rev. 21. 3.* indeed now he dwells in their hearts by faith; but faith is the evidence of things not seen; but then they shall have a personal and glorious enjoyment of him, according to that, *Zeph. 3. 14, 17.* Sing, O daughter of Zion, shout, O Israel, be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem; the Lord hath taken away thy judgment, he hath cast out thine enemy; the King of Israel, the Lord is in the midst of thee, thou shalt not see evil any more; the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save thee. The name of the City from that day shall be, *The Lord is there, Ezek. 48. 35.* and then there will be a gathering together of the righteous, as unto him, so one unto and with another, and his coming and their being gathered together unto him are put together, *2 Thes. 2. 1.* Now in a spiritual and invisible consideration they meet together, they are all one in Jesus Christ, and all in heaven and earth are one family, one house, and instruction given to them here to endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; but yet they are severed and scattered as to personal society, and so at a di-

stance one from another, and many of these unknown one to another, yea some of them not owning one another to be of the same body, whom yet Jesus Christ hath received; they are now scattered and separated one from another.

Sometimes by contentions, judgings and despisings one of another, and this is matter of great lamentation; and when they fall out, they are hardly reconciled, it being the work of Satan, and his instruments to dig up evil, and in their lips is a burning fire; they are set on fire of hell, and would set all on fire; they sow strife, and endeavour further to separate, and make the breach wider by whispering, and secretly somenting jealousies, and so are separating even chief friends, *Prov. 16. 17, 28.* Hence they are admonished to be angry, and not sin, not to let the Sun go down upon their wrath, neither give place to the devil, *Eph. 4. 26, 27.* the devil is watching for such an advantage; and therefore needful to be warned that we be slow to anger, and quick from it, seeing a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong City, and their contentions are like the bars of a Castle, *Prov. 18. 19.* How oft now are they separated in their affections, and delightful fellowships through that sin that dwells in them, and policy of Satan; the weak envying and judging the strong, and the strong (instead of bearing the infirmities of the weak) pleasing themselves, and despising and setting at nought those that have not what they have, *Rom. 14. 10. 15. 39.* *But then the envy of Ephraim shall depart; Ephraim (that had less) shall not envy Judah, and Judah (that was preferred before, and lifted up above their brethren) shall not vex Ephraim, Isa. 11. 13. with 1 Sam. 1. 6.*

Now also they are scattered by the wise and gracious disposition of the householder, the Son of man, he sows them abroad in the field of the world for the good of the world, that they might be instruments of his praise according to their capacity, that men seeing their good works may glorifie their father which is in heaven, and so that his way may be known on the earth, his saving health among all Nations, *Mat. 13. 24, 37. Psal. 67. 1, 2.* *But then his elect shall be gathered together from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, Mat. 8. 11. & 24. 31.* he will then bring the seed of *Israel* from the East, and gather them from the West, and will

will say to the North give up, and to the South, keep not back, bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth, every one that is called by my name, &c. *Isa.* 43. 5, 6, 7.

Now they are scattered sometimes through persecutions, and severed one from another through the fear of the wrath, reproaches, threats, and oppressions of men; and so chased from place to place, when God gives permission unto men, *Act.* 8. 1. *Jam.* 1. 1. So those Worthies of whom the world was not worthy, wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth, *Heb.* 11. 36, 38. and it is appointed to them, that if they will live godly in Christ Jesus they shall suffer persecution, *Act.* 14. 22. *2 Tim.* 3. 12. but then the extortioner shall cease, and the oppressors be consumed out of the Land, *Isa.* 16. 4, 5. the destructions of the enemy shall come to a perpetual end; and their shepherd will seek his sheep that have been scattered, &c. deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day, and feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of *Israel* shall their fold be, *Ezek.* 34. 11, 15. he will seek up that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, &c. and they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid, *ver.* 15, 28.

Now they are separated one from another, and severed by death, many are taken out of the Land of the living; the godly man ceaseth, and the faithful fail from among the children of men: and many times they are cut off untimely, and this is a great wo and affliction to the survivors of that body, and a great judgment to the children of men, how insensible sever they are of it, *Psal.* 12. 1. *Mic.* 7. 1, 2. for then they can be of no more personal usefulness to men, they are then ignorant of us; but then death (as with respect to them) shall be swallowed up into victory, then shall be compleatly fulfilled what the High-Priest spake, not of himself, but by way of Prophecy; for then shall be gathered together in one, the children of God that now are scattered abroad, *Joh.* 11. 51, 52. *Zech.* 14. 4. Oh! how delightful and comfortable will this be to be alwayes with the Lord, and one with another, and no more for ever to be separated; and in this blessed congregation and assembly of the righteous, the sinners shall not stand, *Psal.* 1. 5. *Ezek.* 13. 9.

4. In this congregation and gathering together of the righteous unto the Lord, and one to another, they shall behold the Lord, yea, this is the end why Jesus Christ wills they should be with him, where he is, that they may behold his glory, *Joh. 17. 24.* they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads, *Rev. 22. 4.* how refreshing and desirable was it to *Moses* to see his back parts, so as at the sight thereof he made haste and prayed that he would go amongst them, and take them for his inheritance, *Exod. 33. 22. & 34. 8, 9.* and how comfortable was the hope of this to *Job*, that his Redeemer should stand at the latter day upon the earth, and that he should see him for himself, and his eyes should behold him: Oh! this was a great comfort to him in his affliction, when God's hand was turned against him, and his acquaintance were estranged from him, his kinsfolk failed him, and his familiar friends had forgotten him, &c. *Job 19. 6, 27.* Now while they see him by faith, believing, they rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory, *1 Pet. 1. 8.* But oh! how infinitely satisfying will it be then to see him as he is, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore; they shall then be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house, and he shall make them drink of the rivers of his pleasures, for with him is the fountain of life, and in his light they shall see light; when they awake, they shall be satisfied with God's likeness, or image, even with Jesus Christ who is the image of the invisible God, *Psal. 16. 11. & 36. 8, 9. & 17. 15.* Now through that sight they have of him by faith, their souls are satisfied as with marrow and fatness, *Psal. 63. 3, 6.* they are assured by faith of the truth and goodness of what is reported, and set in hope before them, and of the faithfulness of him that hath promised to perform all his good Word, and have such a view of the desirableness and compleat contentment there is in these things, as that it crucifies their affections to the world, and prevails with them to confess themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and to declare plainly they are seeking another Countrey, and a better, and more induring substance; this preserves them from gadding about, and prevails with them to sit down under Christ's shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to their taste; but yet they are hanging

hungering and thirsting after a full enjoyment of what they now see darkly, they are even sick of love, till their desire comes, and be accomplished, and even longing, and in heart breathing for his appearance: Oh! when wilt thou come to visit me? Oh! that the salvation of *Israel* were come out of *Zion*. As the Hart panteth after the water brooks, so their soul pants after God; their souls thirst for God, for the living God. Oh! when shall we come and appear before God? And thus they are looking for (with expectation) and hasting (from all things reprov'd, and discovered to be evil, deadly and unprofitable) unto the coming of the day of God; but when the desire cometh it will be a tree of life, when the desire is accomplished it will be sweet to the soul, *Prov. 13. 12, 19.* the compleat enjoyment will compleatly satisfie and abundantly delight them, so as they shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more.

5. As the effect and consequent of seeing him, they shall be perfectly made like him; so the Apostle signifies, *1 Joh. 3. 2.* *It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* Now in this day the seeing and beholding him as he hath revealed himself, doth transform them in a first fruits; in beholding him with open face as in a glass, they are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* but when they shall behold him as he is, they shall be compleatly changed into his likeness. And so,

They shall then be made like him in knowledge, though still he hath the preheminance in all things, he being God-man, and worthy is the Lamb that was slain to enjoy it; yet then gloriously of his fulness shall they receive, and grace for grace: They shall not then need those *Mediums* for their help that now they do; whether they be Prophecies they shall fail, whether there be tongues they shall cease, whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away; for we know in part, &c. *1 Cor. 13. 8, 9.* All those gifts of Apostles, Prophets, &c. shall then cease, for they are given from on high to continue till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, *Eph. 4. 8, 13.* they shall not then teach every man his neighbour, and every

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man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know him from the least to the greatest, *Jer.* 31. 27, 34. *Heb.* 8. 11. and it appears this perfect knowledge they shall have through the sight of him. Now in looking to him they are lightened, *Psal.* 34. 5. But Oh! how shall they then be inlightened, when they shall see him as he is? Hence their knowing now, and hereafter is put as the effect, and consequent of their seeing, *1 Cor.* 13. 12. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known; signifying, that according to the sight of him, whether darkly or clearly, such is and will be our knowledge.

And from this sight and knowledge of him, they shall be filled with love to him, and God in him, and with love and charity one to another, for charity never faileth, *1 Cor.* 13. 8. their hearts shall then be ravished with him, from that clear and open discovery of his love and loveliness; their love now to him which is in part, is begotten and increased through the understanding of his; we love him because he first loved us; every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God, for God is love; in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him; whom having not seen ye love, *1 Pet.* 1. 8. but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away, and they shall completely love him, and delight themselves in, and be abundantly satisfied with his love, *1 Job.* 4. 7, 10, 19. *1 Cor.* 13. 10. and shall be filled with divine love one to another, yea and with all heavenly vertues; when they perfectly know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge (even all discovery and manifestation of it vouchsafed, for it is greater than is contained in any revelation of it, and therefore it exceeds all our knowledge and perception of it) they shall be filled with all the fulness of God, *Eph.* 3. 19. and so they shall be like to the Angels that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word, *Luk.* 20. 36. with *Psal.* 103. 20. his will shall then be done on earth as it is in heaven, *Mat.* 6. 10.

And in seeing and beholding him they shall appear with him in glory; then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun in

in the kingdom of their Father, *Mat. 13. 43.* When *Moses* was in the Mount, seeing and beholding the similitude of the Lord, his face shone that the children of *Israel* were afraid, *Exod. 34. 29, 30.* with *Numb. 12. 8.* yet he could not see his face or glorious appearance, so no man hath seen him, nor can see him; but then they shall see his face, and his name, glory and dignity shall be upon their foreheads; the Lord shall arise upon them, and his glory shall be seen upon them, *Rev. 22. 4. Mat. 5. 8. Isa. 60. 1, 2. & 35. 2.*

6. In this glorious condition they shall then together keep an everlasting Sabbath, in that rest, or keeping of Sabbath, which remains for the people of God, *Heb. 4. 9.* and together shall they then sing, for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again *Zion*, *Isa. 52. 8, 9.* they shall then sing *Hallelujah*, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God, *Rev. 19. 1, 7.* they shall sing the song of *Moses*, and the song of the Lamb, *Rev. 15. 3.* in which they shall with thankfulness and rejoycing remember the infinite grace of the Son, and of the Father in him, in what he hath done, and is become; in what he is now doing, and in what he will then do, all summed up in that new song of the four Beasts, and four and twenty Elders, mentioned in *Rev. 5. 9, 10.* to wit,

That the Lamb was (not is) slain, and is raised again in that same body in which he bare our sins on the Tree, and hath destroyed all our enemies by himself in the name, and authority of the Father, his own right hand, and his holy arm hath gotten himself the victory; he hath purged away our sins, overcome and abolished death, destroyed the devil, and obtained all glory into himself in our nature and for us; this is the song of *Moses* in the type, *The Lord hath triumphed gloriously; thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power, thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed the enemy in pieces, Exod. 15. 1, 12. God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet, sing praises to our God, sing praises, sing praises to our King, sing praises, Psal. 98. 1. & 47. 1, 6.* and this the song of the Lamb, that God hath brought him out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set his feet upon a rock, &c. And put a new song into his mouth, praise to our God, who hath so delivered him, and made him triumph over all our

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enemies.

enemies, sin, death, hell, Devil &c. *Psal. 40. 1, 2. & 22. 19, 27.* This is the Psalm or song for the Sabbath day, that God hath made Christ glad through his work, in delivering him and us in him from all our enemies, and exalting his horn like that of an Unicorn, and anointing him with fresh oyl, with the oyl of gladness above his fellows; this is the day which the Lord hath made, they shall then for ever be glad, and rejoyce in and for it, *Psal. 92. 1, 4, 10. & 118. 21, 24.*

And that he hath redeemed them unto God by his blood (in discovering the preciousness of it in his testimony, and testimonies of his goodness) out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and Nation, when they were sometimes of them, and so of the world, children of wrath by nature, even as others; yet then God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved them when dead in sins, quickned them together with Christ, as *Eph. 2. 1, 5.* for this they are now instructed to sing *Allelujab*, *Psal. 135. 1, 4. Praise ye the Lord, &c. for the Lord is good, sing praises to his name, for it is pleasant; for the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure; they shall then gloriously triumph in the works of his hands, which he is now working, in leading forth his people which he hath redeemed out of the world, Exod. 15. 13. Psal. 92. 4, 5. and the Lord himself shall rejoyce in his works, Psal. 104. 31.*

And that he shall then destroy all enemies, and save his people with an everlasting salvation, and they shall then reign on the earth: These are now his thoughts, which are very deep; his enemies, and theirs shall then perish, and all the workers of iniquity be destroyed for ever; but his horn shall be exalted with honour gloriously and visibly, and the righteous shall flourish, *Psal. 92.* he shall then bring in his people, and plant them in the mountain of his inheritance, in the place which he hath made for them to dwell in, in the sanctuary which his hands have established, and the Lord shall reign for ever and ever, *Psal. 149. Exod. 15. 17, 18.*

7. And now they shall have a glorious inheritance, to which I shall not here speak, because it more properly refers to the latter end of the verse. And, thus according to my great weakness I have shewed the first Reason, why the Gospel is called the Word of his Grace.

2. This

2. This is called the Word of his grace, because hereby he gives grace unto men; even as it is called the Word of Life, because, as it discovers that eternal life in Christ, so it gives life unto others; *The words that I speak unto you, saith Christ, they are spirit, and they are life,* Joh. 6. 63. so it is called the word of salvation, because it not only shews where salvation is wrought and compleated, but therein and therewith also it brings salvation to men, &c. So here answerably, the Gospel of Christ is called the word of his grace, because as it is the most excellent means whereby God manifests and reveals his grace in Christ, as before, so hereby he gives grace unto men; he doth manifest his goodness and graciousness unto men, and gives them some discovery and discerning of it by all means; *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work; he left not himself without witness to the Gentiles,* Psal. 19. 1, 6. & 147. 7, 9. with Act. 14. 17. Rom. 1. 19. 28. but he was more especially good to Israel, therefore they especially were to praise him, and had peculiar ingagement so to do; *He shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel: he had not dealt so with any Nation, and as for his judgments they had not known them,* Psal. 147. 12, 19, 20. *What advantage hath the Jew?* &c. much every way, chiefly because unto them was committed the Oracles of God, though hereby simply they were not better as to their gracious state with God, yet they had greater advantage so to be, Rom. 3. 1, 2, 9. and still greater advantage is given to us, now the Gospel is preached according to the revelation of the mystery. And hence it is said, *That grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,* Joh. 1. 17. and that the Prophets in former times prophesied of the grace that should be brought and vouchsafed to us, 1 Pet. 1. 10, namely, the more clear and abundant revelation of it, and therewith a more free dispensing of it, whereby he gives and prevents men with capacity to behold his grace in Christ, and is turning them from idols unto God, to serve the living & true God. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, whether men be converted by it or no, it is converting, restoring, and bringing it back to God; and in order hereto the testimony of the Lord (in which God hath testified unto us what Jesus Christ hath done for us, and is become, and his grace in him, this) is

sure, making wise the simple; even those that are without
 mixture of wisdom; it fails not in this efficacy of it, it dis-
 covers Jesus Christ, who is the fountain and object of wis-
 dom, in knowing whom we may be made wise, and it gives
 wisdom and subtilty to the simple, *Jam. 1. 5. Prov. 1. 4.*
 The commandement (the old and new commandement de-
 clared from the beginning, in which was prophesied and pro-
 mised, that the seed of the woman should break the Serpents
 head, and which is now more revealed, because the darknes
 is past, *1. Job. 2. 7, 8.* this) is pure, namely in its effect also,
 inlightning the eyes, and therewith converting, *Psal 19. 7. 8.*
 Hereby he gives grace of repentance unto men, and is ope-
 rating faith in them, his spirit being alwayes vouchsafed,
 and present in and with this testimony of Christ in the faith-
 ful ministracion of it, even unto the end of the world, so
 that he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man but God, *Mat. 28. 20.*
1. Thes. 4. 8. Surely he doth accompany all means which he
 affordeth, while it is called to day, with some presence of
 his Spirit, and doth in due time give some supernatural
 light unto men, because he is willing all should come to re-
 pentance: There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of
 the Almighty giveth them understanding, *Job 32. 8.* He saith
 not, it must give it them if they have it, but it doth give it
 unto them: So he is said to give breath unto the people up-
 on the earth, and spirit to them that walk therein, *Isa. 42. 5.*
 and that his Spirit is sent forth into all the earth, even that
 Spirit which the Lamb that was slain hath received, *Rev. 5. 6.*
1. Pet. 3. 19, 20. and in and with his Prophets he spake by his
 Spirit, and gave his good Spirit even unto them that rebelled
 against him to instruct them, and this aggravated their ini-
 quity, that they alwayes rejected the Holy Ghost, for God
 did not only call them with an outward call, but he sent his
 words in his Spirit, in the light and power thereof, and so
 stretched out his hand unto them, *Neb. 9. 20, 26, 30. Zeck.*
7. 12. Isa. 65. 2. but now in and with the Gospel of Christ
 as now preached according to the revelation of the mystery,
 he doth pour forth of his Spirit upon all flesh; namely, to
 glorifie Christ, and shew his excellency and comeliness for
 our escape, and therein and therewith to wither all flesh, to
 shew that all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man, the
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goodliness of the flesh is as the flower of the field, that men might cease therefrom, and turn in his reproofs, and so he will further pour forth his Spirit unto them, *AB. 2. 17.* with *Isa. 40. 3, 8.* Hence it is called the ministration of spirit, even of this spirit of grace, *2 Cor. 3. 6, 8.* With this Gospel the Apostle was sent to open the eyes of Jews and Gentiles, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, *AB. 26. 17, 18, 22* yea, any man in having and declaring it faithfully, doth minister grace to the hearers, *Eph. 4. 28.* with *Col. 4. 6.* It is true, men have no knowledge of, or will to any thing that is spiritually good, yea, they are naturally inclined to all evil, tossing after vain things, but he giveth more grace, grace abounding and exceeding their natural corruption, pulling down their strong holds, casting down their imaginations, and every high thing that exalts it self against the knowledge of God; it presents more excellent and glorious arguments, and gives more strength; wherefore he saith, *God resisteth the proud*, such as still refuse to humble themselves, and turn at his reproofs, *Jam. 4. 5, 6.* the grace of God saving to all men hath now appeared, *Tit. 2. 11.* and therefore mens sin is readred hereby to be exceeding sinful, because they either receive not this grace, or receive it in vain, because they receive not the love of the truth so as to be saved thereby, *2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12.* But no more to this, because it hath been in part spoken to already.

3. This Gospel of Christ is called the word of his grace, because it is that whereby he gives grace more abundantly to them that hear in hearing; he rejecteth the proud, that scorn to receive his grace, but he giveth grace to the humble, *Jam. 4. 6.* He so giveth testimony to the Word of his grace, as that in receiving this men receive the Spirit, even through this hearing of faith, and not by the works of the Law, even that spirit of faith, whereby they have the faith of the operation of God wrought in them, and so they are said to have believed through grace, *Gal. 3. 2; AB. 14. 1, 3. & 18. 27.* Hence this is called the Word of faith, both because it testifies Christ to be the foundation and object of faith, and because by it he is working faith in those that hear it, yea and doth work it in all those that in hearing hear, *Rom. 10. 8, 17.* and so chuses them out of the world, from the state and fellowship

lowship thereof; saves them from their ignorance of God, and enmity unto God, *Rom. 11. 5. 6. Tit. 3. 3. 5.* it is that means whereby he makes them partakers of the forgiveness of their sins in their minds and consciences; they are justified by grace, justified by faith, by this word of faith believed, even from all things from which they could not be justified by the Law of *Moses. Tit. 3. 7. Rom. 5. 1. Ait. 13. 39.* he makes the opening of his name in his testimony, the very declaration of that justification and forgiveness he hath received, powerful to wash them from the guilt of their sins, and so speaks peace to them, *Ait. 26. 18.* the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, doth make them free from the Law of sin and death, and so from the accusation of sin by the Law, in opening this argument unto them, that what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, *Rom. 8. 1. 3.* It washes their heart from an evil conscience, namely, from a conscience that chargeth and condemns it self as held under wrath, because our first Father hath sinned, and we in him, and come forth from him naturally and necessarily polluted, for this is not now the condemnation; and from an evil conscience that seeks by dead works to wash it self, and speak peace to it self from some works of righteousness of ours. This truth known makes free, and so the Son hereby, *Heb. 10. 22. Job. 8. 31, 32, 36.* yea, and hereby they receive remission of those sins in which they sin after the similitude of *Adam's* transgression. *To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive forgiveness of sins, Ait. 10. 43.* And so being justified by faith, they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, freedom from the fear of his wrath, and that in believing his Word; he fills with joy and peace in believing, and multiplies grace and peace to them through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, even through the doctrine of him known and received by them, *Rom. 5. 1. & 15. 13. 2 Pet. 1. 2.* and so begets them again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead as discovered in the Gospel, for it is his word that quickens them, *1 Pet. 1. 3. Psal. 119. 50, 93.* yea, hereby he washes them from the dominion and service of

of sin in their members, that henceforth they should not serve sin, and walking in the Spirit, in minding the things of the Spirit, and yielding up to its operations, sin shall not have dominion over them; nor shall they fulfil the lusts of the flesh, *Job. 15. 3. &c. 8. 32. Rom. 6. 14. Gal. 5. 16. Psal. 17. 4. &c. 119. 9, 11.* through this knowledge of Christ, and God's grace in him, he gives unto them still and further the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to glorify Christ, and enamour their hearts on him, and so to redeem them from their vain conversation, *Eph. 1. 17, 18. 1 Per. 1. 18, 19. Tit. 2. 14.* And hereby he gives unto every one of this body, grace, even some gracious gift, whereby they may speak to God, and pour out their hearts unto him; and some useful gift to speak to men, as this testimony of Christ is received by them, and confirmed in them, *Rom. 8. 26. 1 Cor. 1. 5, 6. Job. 7. 38, 39.* yea, in and with this he doth establish them, and save them from the error of the wicked, and from divers and strange doctrines, that they may not be as children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, *Heb. 13. 7, 9. Eph. 4. 11, 14. 1 Cor. 15. 1, 2. Psal. 17. 4.* He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son, to preserve and keep him from those deceivers that are entered into the world, and to make him strong, that the wicked one shall not touch him, so as to corrupt him from that simplicity in Christ, *2 Job. 7. 9. 1 Job. 2. 13, 14. &c. 4. 4. &c. 5. 18.* yea, hereby he gives grace to them to strengthen them with might unto all long-suffering and patience with joyfulness in those afflictions and tribulations which he is ordering unto them, this is their comfort in their affliction, for his word quickens them, and it is unto them the joy and rejoicing of their hearts, *Col. 1. 11. Psal. 119. 49, 50, 78, 82. Jer. 15. 15, 16, 17.* he creates the fruit of his lips unto them in his testimony peace, peace, and so heals them that are broken in heart, and binds up their griefs, *Psal. 147. 2. with Psal. 107. 20. Isa. 57. 15, 19.* with *Chap. 61. 1, 3.* and so causeth them to know and prove that his grace is sufficient for them, though the temptation and affliction be not removed, and hereby shoes their feet that they may not be discouraged, or driven back by any afflictions, though they seem to be very grievous, *Rom. 5. 2, 6. 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9. Eph. 6. 15.* yea, it is the power of

of God to salvation to every one that believeth, and whereby they are kept through faith unto that salvation ready to be revealed in these last times, *Rom. 1. 16. 1 Pet. 1. 5.* it is able to build them up, &c. as it follows in the after part of this verse. And, Oh that we may never forget it, or let it slip. *Forget not wisdom, neither decline from the words of her mouth; forsake her not and she shall preserve thee, love her and she shall keep thee; exalt her and she shall promote thee, &c. she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, &c. Prov. 4. 2, 9.*

Thus, though weakly, I have spoken to the first thing proposed in this resignation, *viz.* the person and thing to which he commends them; in which, in some little measure, we may see the worthiness and excellency of this Object and Medium to which he now commends them, and that for our instruction also, that in God we may praise his word; as *Psal. 56. 4, 10.* and now come to consider the next thing, *viz.*

2. What is here meant by commending, and what is imported to us herein?

1. By [commending] here is not meant a praising or speaking honourably of them, and so in their commendation, as many times the word signifies, they deserved not in this sense to be commended to God, yea he of himself saith, that though he knew nothing by himself, yet he was not hereby justified, this would not commend him to God, *1 Cor. 4. 4.* *If I be righteous, saith Job, yet I will not lift up my head, Job 10. 15.* Those holy men that trusted in God have been so far from commending themselves in this sense, that they have abased themselves in God's presence, and prayed him not to condemn them, *Job 10. 2.* nor to enter into judgment with them, *Psal. 142. 2.* and have intimately acknowledged, that if God should mark iniquities, none could stand as approved and justified before him, *Psal. 130. 3, 4, 7.* and our Saviour instructs his Disciples to say, when they have done all those things which are commanded them, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do, *Luk. 17. 10.* and not to praise themselves, or one another. But the word [commend] doth here and elsewhere signify a committing a person or thing to the care or custody of another, to betrust one with such or such a thing or person; and so to com.

commit and commend seem to be used indifferently: So when it is said in one place, *Into thy hand I commit my spirit*; in another, our Saviour, as it appears, referring thereto, saith, *Into thine hands I commend my spirit*, *Psal. 31. 6.* with *Luke 23. 46.* and so the Apostle commendeth these to God, &c. to be taught, directed, cared for and preserved, and so unto and for all things as the needs of their matters did require.

2. Now then in that he saith [I commend you] therein is imported, something as to the person and thing to which he commits them, something as to himself who did thus commend them; something as to the persons he thus commended.

1. As to the person and thing to which he commends them, there is intimated therein.

1. A willingness and readines to take the charge and care of those committed to him; amongst men they commit not a person or thing to any one that is not willing to receive that trust; and much less can any commend to him, unless he were graciously willing to receive them, and that he is so, hath been the design of what is spoken, to evidence and demonstrate; and it is shewn abundantly in the word of his grace. He is one that hath greatly loved us when dead in sins and trespasses, and manifested his love in laying down his life for us; yea, and made it known in due time through preaching, and first prevented us with it, when we sought not after him, he manifested himself to them that asked not after him, and will in no wise cast off him that cometh, but loves them with peculiar manner of love, even with such manner of love as wherewith the Father loves him, *Joh. 15. 9, 10.* he receives them; and will be a father to them; and these were by the father already committed to him, and his peculiar care; he was their shepherd that had bought them, and was rich in mercy to them; he hath an high account of such, and hath set his heart and eye upon them; yea, he is one that is especially ready to receive those of this chosen generation committed to him, when he takes away those that have been instruments of help to them, he is a refuge for the oppressed; a refuge in the time of trouble; even then after a peculiar consideration, *Psal. 9. 9.* he is an helper of

the fatherless, *Psal. 10. 14.* a father of the fatherless, a judge of the widows (of those that are desolate) is God in his holy habitation, *Psal. 68. 4. 5.* in him the fatherless find mercy, *Hos. 14. 3.* and now when he takes away such as have been eminent helpers to them, he is then abundantly ready to receive those that are committed, and do commit themselves to him: So much he signifies, in that when the faithful failed, he then saith, *Now will I arise, saith the Lord, Psal. 12. 5.* And on a like account, and in the encouragement of his special readiness to receive those that come, at such a time when there is none shut up or left, that might here be comforters to them, the Prophet resolves to look to the Lord, and wait for him, *My God will bear me, when I sit in darkness* (when those instruments that have shined as lights are gone) *the Lord will be a light unto me, Mic. 7. 8.* he will not leave them fatherless, or Orphans, but will then especially be nigh unto them, and ready to receive them, *Job. 14. 18.*

2. His ability and faithfulness to keep them committed to him (*2 Tim. 2. 2.*) and this hath also been evidenced in what hath been said; he is the wise God, and our Saviour, who is able to keep them from falling, through his powerful word, the word of his grace, and to present them faultless before the presence of his glory, *Jude 24. 25.* he hath wonderfully manifested his faithfulness in what he hath suffered and endured for us, and we are instructed to consider him who was faithful to him that appointed him, and to be always looking to him who endured the Cross, despising the shame; and therein we may behold, and be fully assured of his faithfulness in perfecting whatsoever concerns us, *Heb. 3. 1. 2. & 12. 2.* *Isa. 42. 1. 3.* and he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think; the Father hath committed all judgment to him, and so infinitely loved him, because he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross, that he hath not given the Spirit by measure unto him, but hath filled him immeasurably therewith, and hath given all things into his hand, *Joh. 5. 22. & 3. 34. 35.* with Chap. 10. 17. 18. yea, herein is imported his sufficiency and readiness to assist them, and dispense unto them, according to their needs and capacities, whatsoever was good, unto all their services and sufferings, and unto the utmost serving.

ving of them, that they might be preserved blameless unto his coming, and so not fail of his grace, *1 Thes. 5. 23, 24. Heb. 7. 25.*

2. As with respect to himself who now commended them, even the Apostle, there is signified.

1. That he had the care of these lying upon him, and indeed upon him came daily the care of all the Churches; he was a steward, to whom a great trust was committed; and it is probable was the first that planted the Gospel among them, and so might be an instrumental father of them, and now he shews his love to these who had first given themselves to the Lord, and afterwards to him and his fellow-labourers by the will of God, as *2 Cor. 8. 5.* and his faithfulness to his Lord, in returning the charge of them to him from whom he received it: herein imitating our Saviour, the great shepherd of the Sheep; *Thine they were, saith he, and thou gavest them me, and now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come unto thee, holy father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, Joh. 17. 6, 11, 13.* And thus our Brother, who was counted faithful, and put into the Ministry, and had a trust committed to him, when departing to shew his faithfulness to the chief shepherd, and love to the sheep, returned his charge to him from whom he had received it.

2. His assurance of his faithfulness and ability to whom he commends them, it was to him whom he knew by experience to be gracious, and had proved faithful in all things, who had been exceeding abundantly gracious to him, and had stood by him and strengthened him; even as *Israel* blessed *Jacob*, and intimately commends him and his to one whose faithfulness he had proved. *The God, saith he, which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless, &c. Gen. 48. 15, 16.* He knew whom he had believed, and he was persuaded that he was able to keep that which he committed to him against that day, as *2 Tim. 1. 12.* he was well assured of, and satisfied in his infinite faithfulness, and therefore safely trusts in him, and commends these unto him, *2 Tim. 4. 17, 18.*

3. As with respect to them whom he commends, he may intimate unto us,

1. That they were children, such as had not attained, ei-

ther were already perfect, *Phil.* 3. 12. and could not keep themselves; they were all little children, though there might be diversity among themselves, some fathers, experienced believers, who might be instruments of begetting others through the Gospel; and some young men, who were strong, having the word of God abiding in them, and some weak and babes; yet in this respect all little children, they had not yet attained to perfection, as *1 Joh.* 2. 12, 14, 18. they yet needed a tutor, but not such as they were under during the ministration of the Law, in which, though sons, they differed nothing from servants; but such an one as became sons, even Christ as a Son over his own house, and the word of his grace, and so the Law of faith, and not of works; they were not perfect as to attainment, and therefore needed to be committed to one who would be careful of, and faithful to them; yea, and that they had many enemies, who would endeavour to corrupt them from the simplicity that is in Christ, and if possible defraud them of their inheritance, and so beguile them of their reward; many evil men, violent persons, and many seducers that would endeavour to pervert them, and subvert their souls, by removing them from him who had called them into the grace of Christ; they were weak in themselves, and had strong enemies, whose end was destruction, and therefore they needed an helper.

2. To instruct them to commit themselves to, and leave themselves with him, *Psal.* 10. 14. to submit themselves to God, and commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator, and to be ordered, and guided, and taught by this Law of grace, and to have all their expectation from him and it, for their being kept by his power in this Gospel through faith unto salvation, *1 Pet.* 4. 19. & *1.* 5. And indeed this is the most perfect means by which he doth now help them, assist, instruct and strengthen them, and preserve them from evil; the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, *Rom.* 1. 16. This is the way whereby he keeps the souls of those committed to him; so much may be signified to us in this, That when the congregation of God's poor cry out to him, *Help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth*, &c. God doth then create the fruit of his lips, peace, and speaks good words and com-

com-

comfortable to them, in first assuring them that in committing themselves to him, he would care for them, and protect them; and then he, or the Prophet in his name, directs them where they might meet with his gracious keeping, guidance and preservation; he will set his poor and needy ones in safety, but wherewith and where may they expect this, so as to commit themselves and way thereto? The words of the Lord (of, or concerning the Lord, in which is shewed that he is the Lord, and by what means he is so become, and the grace of God in him, and so the words that are spoken by the Lord, in the words of the Holy Ghost, and not which man's wisdom teacheth) are pure words; that is, they are pure in themselves, in what they testify of the Lord, and of all things, faithful words, there is no lye of them; and worthy of all acceptation; they give a true and right discovery of all things, and a good and gracious report of the Lord; and they are pure in their effect and efficacy, enlightning the eyes, *Psal.* 19. 7, 8. and purifying the heart, *Act.* 15. 19. and so purifying from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, *Jam.* 3. 17. *Joh.* 15. 3. by this means then God saves and helps, even by his words, and therefore he is commending them to us, that we might in them, and by them expect his performing all things for us. Now then in that he saith, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, therein is imported to us, that his desire and counsel was, that they should betake themselves to God; and this faithful word for and unto all things, and not wander herefrom as a bird from her nest, but even say with rejoycing as they, *Jer.* 3. 22. *Behold we come unto thee, &c.*

3. In that he now commends them to God, when he was to be taken from their head, as it were (as *2 King.* 2. 3, 5.) and when he had signified some jealousy concerning them, or some of them, as *ver.* 30. he may signifie unto them, that now it behoved them, and they needed to commit themselves more immediately to God, and the word of his grace then formerly, and to take heed to themselves singly and jointly, as *ver.* 28. and not too much confide one in another, lest both he that helpeth fall, and they who are holpen fall, and both fall together; such an understanding may agree with other places of Scripture, in which such causes of lamentation

tion are presented; so much I conceive, is signified in that, *Psal. 12.* by that cry lifted up to God: *Help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful* (even such whose spirits were fixed, and hearts united to proclaim God's goodness to the children of men, *Prov. 20. 6.* these) fall from among the children of men; there were some of the congregation of God's poor and needy left, who thus pour out their hearts; but as persons sensible there were none of such usefulness and faithfulness left behind, none in whom they could so safely trust, or to whom they could so securely commit themselves, as they could have done to those taken away, they therefore more immediately apply themselves to the Lord, and jointly intreat his mercy: *Arise, O Lord, for our helpfulness, stand up for us, for our faithful helpers are gone, and we have none like them left behind:* And the Lord, as moved with bowels toward them, graciously answers, and saith; *Now will I arise, saith the Lord, because of the sighing of the needy;* as intimating, that while these faithful ones were preserved, he had committed the care to them, as it were, and took his rest, and even sate him down, but now there were none like them he had taken away, or like minded to them, he would arise for their help, and keep them in safety by his words from those that would insnare them, as is before said, *ver. 5.* And the Prophet as it were filled with joy, and resting satisfied with God's gracious assurance, replies *ver. 7.* *Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever; the poor commit themselves to thee, and thou hast graciously said, thou wilt arise and set them in safety, and be thy self* (more immediately) *the helper of and guide to them, and thou shalt have the keeping of them, for they cannot so safely commit themselves to those surviving as they could have done to those taken away, there is none to guide them that is of like usefulness and faithfulness;* like that bewailed and declared to be an heavy testimony of displeasure, *Isa. 51. 17, 18.* *There is none to guide Jerusalem among all the sons she hath brought forth* (she hath sons that are begotten of her, of whom she is the mother, but there is none that hath such skilfulness in the word of righteousness to guide her, *Psal. 78. 72.*) *nor any that taketh her by the hand* (to be a comfort to, and leader of her in this day of her weakness, languishing and darkness) *of all the sons she hath brought up.* To the

the same purpose also is the counsel of the Prophet *Micah*, in such a day of calamity. *We know*, saith he, &c. *the good man is perished out of the earth*, &c. *Mic. 7. 1, 2. Trust ye not in a friend* (who were friends to you, and in whom, in a sense you might trust, while the good man was continued in the earth) *put no confidence in a guide*; there is none like the good man, and faithful ones taken away, and though they are guides, and not to be despised in their prophecyings, yet put no confidence in them, namely, such as you might have done in those removed; they are not like the good man, the merciful man, they want mercies and kindness to pursue your good singly, they are not so filled with bowels of mercies to pity you, and strengthen you in your weaknesses, and even to put their souls in your souls stead, but may rather add grief to your sorrow; you cannot so freely and safely pour out your hearts and complaints to them, and acquaint them with your temptations and exercises, as you might have done the merciful man; *Who was weak*, and *he was not weak* & *who was offended*, & *he burned not*? *2 Cor. 12. 29.* Or they are not upright like those faithful ones who fall from among the children of men, not so intirely loving Christ, *Cant. 1. 4.* and cleaving to the Lord with full purpose, not seeking the things of Christ with a neglect of their own things, but either corrupting the word of God, and mixing therewith the wisdom of this world, either natural or artificial, *1 Cor. 1. 17. 2 Cor. 2. 17.* Or otherwise pursuing their own name, and praise, and esteem, and instead of boasting in and of God boasting of themselves, and their own mouths praising themselves, proclaiming their own goodness, kindness, faithfulness, successfulness, and what they have done for this and that person, and how much they have exceeded others, *Prov. 20. 6.* Or not faithful in their reprovings, but have either omitted the rebuking of their brethren, when need required, and so hated them, and suffered sin upon them, *Lev. 19. 17. Prov. 27. 6.* Or else have done it in proud wrath, and so the best of them like a bryar, even scratching and breaking others to pieces with their words, and even tearing them instead of healing them, *Job 19. 2.* and so doing things out of strife. Or not upright in their conversations outwardly, that men seeing their good works, might glorify God in the day of visitation, but rather causing the name

name of God and his doctrine to be evil spoken of, and blasphemed by their receiving it in vain, and so causing the Ministry to be blamed. Or if they be more upright hearted than the generality, yet you can put no such confidence in their openings and applyings of the testimony of Christ, as you might have done in the good mans who is removed; *therefore*, saith the Prophet, *I will look to the Lord*, namely, more immediately, and encourageth himself with this assurance, my God will hear me; even now especially he will prepare his ear to hear me, and be a light to me now the good man is perished (like that before in *Psal. 12.*) and cries, feed thy flock, especially now the good man is perished, *Mis. 7. 5, 8, 14.* He hath promised, and is faithful that hath promised, that when the poor and needy seek water and there is none, he the Lord will hear them, he who is the God of *Israel* will not forsake them, &c. *Isa. 41. 17.* And yet in committing themselves to God, and the word of his grace, they should be directed to give to every one their due, and not to neglect (though they could not put such confidence in) these left behind, but to consider their word, and the end of their conversation.

3. Wherefore the Apostle now especially commends and resigns them to God, and the word of his grace; to the end they should commit themselves unto, and leave themselves with him?

This hath been signified in part before, and is also intimated afterward in the verse; yet I shall add somewhat further, and say in general; he doth commit them to him with instruction to them to commit themselves to God, and leave themselves with him, and the word of his grace, 1. For his help, *Psal. 10. 14.* 2. For his preservation of them, *Psal. 12. 7.* as referring to the scope of the Apostle in the former verses.

1. For his help of them, and assistance to be graciously vouchsafed to them, and expected by them; and that both, 1. Upon the account of his being taken away, and so for our instruction when God removes faithful and eminent watchmen. 2. And that they might feed the flock of God, and so for believers edifying one another more generally.

1. As with respect to his being taken away, and so for instruction

struction to us when God removes faithful and eminent watchmen in the midst of their dayes; what I shall speak under this head will be of more direct respect to our selves to whom God hath been ordering such an occasion of mourning and lamentation; and I so let us now commit our selves to God as with respect to them so taken away, and as with respect to our selves that yet are preserved in the Land of the living.

1. As with respect to them so taken away, let us betake our selves to God, and to the word of his grace, that we sorrow not for them as those that have no hope; it is far better with them as is before said, they sleep in Jesus, and are delivered from those sorrows, troubles and disquietments that here they were exposed to. Hence the Prophet, when he had been saying, *The righteous perisheth, and merciful men are taken away,* adds, from the evil; and *He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds,* &c. as that which was proper to comfort the contrite one, and his mourners, *Isa. 57. 1, 2.* And though the Apostle *John* had given him in charge at first, to write the things which he had seen, and the things which are, &c. *Rev. 1. 11, 19.* yet also he had a voice from heaven particularly and expressly commanding him to write (that it might be preserved for, and considered in the time to come) *blessed are the dead that dye in the Lord,* &c. *Rev. 14. 13.* And to the Apostle on like account saith, *If we believe that Jesus dyed and rose again, then them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,* &c. *Wherefore comfort one another with these words,* *1 Thes. 4. 14, 18.* And oh that the consolations of God may not be small with us on this account.

2. As with respect to our selves who are yet preserved in the Land of the living, let us on such an occasion commit and betake our selves to him for his gracious teaching us out of his Law what we see not by any light that is in us as of us, or what we have forgotten, or let slip; that we may know wherefore he is ordering such great and heavy testimonies of displeasure, that we may be contrite, and humble our selves before him, and be broken off from what he hath been reproving us for; doubtless in acquainting our selves with him, and the word of his grace, and his instructions, we may know wherefore he is thus pleading with us; thereby he is teach-

ing us what we see not, that we might not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is, *Job 34. 31, 32. Prov. 6. 24.*

In general, it appears, the cause of his so lifting up his hand amongst us is, because of our great provocations of him; for he who is the God of all grace, doth not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men; and much less doth he, till he be highly provoked, smite with such heavy strokes as these are; such judgments are of such a nature as in which he shews his people very hard things, and gives them the wine of astonishment to drink; especially when he smokes against the prayers of his people: Such as in which he begins to give to his *Jerusalem* the cup of his fury to drink; yea the dregs of the cup wrung out, as *Isa. 51. 17, 18.* hereby threatening to take away his Kingdom from them; therefore surely we may in the light of the Lord see, that when he so judges us, there hath been lewdness found in our filthiness; so much they acknowledge and bewail when God's hand was turned against them, *Lam. 3. 42, 44.* we have transgressed (as a wife treacherously departs from her Husband, we have gone a whoring from under our God) and have rebelled (*viz.* gone on, and continued in our transgression against light and admonition; rebelled against the light) *thou hast not pardoned; thou hast covered with anger and persecuted us, thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied; thou hast covered thy self with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass throu.* Not only did God shut out the Prophets prayer when he cryed and shouted, even prayed very earnestly, as *ver. 8.* but he covered himself with a cloud that prayer should not pass throu; when they assembled together, and there was some joint agreement of them in their praying, as it may seem. The reasons then of God's proceeding on in such judgments in removing such faithful instruments unimely, and notwithstanding his people have been crying and praying for sparing mercies, yet he hath not given such gracious returns as they have begged for, are (as far as I am helped to understand)

1. More generally, because those that are hearers of the word are hearers only, receiving his grace in vain, and not suffering it to have its efficacy upon them, so as to redeem them from their iniquities, and purifie them unto God a peculiar

liar people zealous of good works; this even provokes God to remove his servants from us, when men are hearers of the word, and not doers; so much the Apostle signifieth, *I know*, saith he, *that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith, &c. only let your conversation be as become the Gospel of Christ*; implying, that the want of this would be the only cause of their being deprived of such a mercy, *Phil. 1. 25, 27*. So the Lord by the Prophet *Ezekiel* threatens, that he would make them desolate of their glory, and make them know that a Prophet had been among them, by his removing him from them, because they sate before him as his people, and heard his words, but they would not do them; yea, though the Prophet was unto them as a very lovely song of one that had a pleasant voice, and they heard his words, delightfully it seems, yet they did them not, *Ezek. 33. 29, 33*. yea, mens persisting in such iniquity will at last provoke him to lay them open to the wild beasts to devour them, as here, *ver. 29*. the earth which (drinking in the rain that oft cometh upon it, yet) beareth bryars and thorns, is rejected, and nigh unto cursing, &c. namely, it is rejected from that use it was set apart for, and peculiar care that was toward it, and pains used in it, and about it. Whereas it was set apart for a vineyard or garden, and so dealt with in every respect and inclosed, their still bearing bryars and thorns, instead of herbs, and traie meet for him by whom they are dressed, will provoke the Husbandman to take away the hedge thereof, and break down the wall thereof, and so reject it from that peculiar use it was intended for, and nighness it was brought into, and so it is nigh to cursing even now to be eaten up and trodden down; yea, it provokes God in judgment to forbear pruning or digging it, and on his judgments to write their sin, as they brought forth bryars and thorns as their sins, so now by his raking away the hedge, and forbearing to prune and dig them, there should in judgment come up bryars and thorns, and he will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it, *Heb. 6. 8*. with *Isa. 3. 1, 7*. the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, and suffer it not to redeem them unto God from their sins and idols; for this abiden in, and yielded up

to, would make free from the dominion and service of sin; and consecrate and devote men unto God, and make them servants of righteousness; yea, for this the wrath of God is so revealed, that therefore God shall send men strong delusions, that they should believe a lye. &c. because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved; namely, they received it not to that end, they might receive it after a manner, and many did, and do receive it as good tydings, as a right and true opinion, are perswaded of the truth of it, and plead for it against opposers, and yet still they retain a lye in their right hand, and are not washed hereby from the pollutions of the world into Jesus Christ; and so how firmly soever they may credit it, and how stiffly soever they may plead for it, yet while they love darkness rather than light, they are under condemnation; and reckoned amongst such as believe not on the name of the Son of God, and reputed as such as have not received the truth, but as such as have pleasure in unrighteousness, *Rom. 1. 18. Job. 8. 31, 32. Rom. 6. 17, 18. 2 Thes. 2. 10, 11. Job. 3. 18, 19. with 2 Thes. 2. 10, 12.*

Yea, this receiving his grace in vain so provokes God; as that he will hide his face, and will not hear, or take notice of their crying unto him (so as to give gracious returns, how servant soever they seem to be therein; yea, though they fast and pray, and seek him daily, and delight to know his ways and take delight in approaching to God, yet he will not hear: So God himself by his Prophet in his answer to the demand of such signifies; *Wherefore have we fasted*, say they, *and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold*, saith the Prophet, *the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear, &c. but your iniquities* (who thus seek him daily, and fast, and pray) *have made him hide his face from you that he will not hear*, *Isa. 58. 1, 3. &c. 59. 1, 2.* yea, though men fast, and mourn, and weep, and set apart extraordinary times for it, and continue a long time in thus crying unto him, yet their having hardened their hearts against his words, and not being doers of them; and in their waitings on him not making this the one thing principally sought for, that they may turn from their iniquities, and understand his truth, this causeth him not to hear when they cry, *Zech. 7. 2, 13. with Dan. 9. 13, 14.*

yea,

yea, when his people, who have his name upon them, love to wander and refrain not their feet, it provokes him to be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save; and though they fast and cry, yea, and though his faithful servants pray for his mercy for them, yet he will not hear, *Jer.* 14. 7, 9, 10, 12. with *Chap.* 15. 1. yea, when men bless themselves in their hearts, concluding they shall have peace, though they walk in the imagination of their heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, and so abuse the goodness of God, and turn his grace into wantonness, continuing in sin because grace hath abounded; this provokes God greatly to angry, and causeth him to smoke, even against the prayers of such, *Deut.* 29. 19, 20. with *Psal.* 80. 4.

And this is for admonition to us all, that we walk while we have the light, lest darkness come upon us, &c. even to believe in the light, that we may be the children of the light, born of it, and walking in the light as God is in the light, as he is in it reproving and discovering our vileness and sinfulness, so to confess it as discovered, and to lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and to receive with meekness his ingrafted word which is able to save the soul, *Joh.* 12. 35, 36. *1 Jam.* 1. 22, 25.

2. More particularly, the cause of God's taking away his faithful servants untimely, and in anger to the survivors is, because those to whom such have prophesied cannot indure sound doctrine, but have been angry with, and secretly, at least, haters of faithful reproofs, and reprovers, this is an iniquity which is very provoking to God, when those that are hearers resolve not to give heed to their words in which they are faithfully admonishing of what is evil, and shewing to them the bitter fruit of going on still in their trespasses, and that whole walketh in crooked paths shall know no peace, *Jer.* 18. 15, 18, 23. This provokes God at some times to stop the mouths of his servants while he continues them in the Land of the living, even men hardning their hearts against warning and admonition: *For this cause, God saith to the Prophet, I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover, for they are a rebellious house, Ezek.* 2. & 3. 7, 26. and God hath more generally given instruction of this nature; *Rebuke not a scorner,* namely,

namely, one that heareth not rebuke, that loveth not one that reproveth him, *Prov. 9. 8.* with *Chap. 13. 1.* & *15. 1.* and threatens it as a judgment, that when men hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and abhor him that speaks uprightly, that then the prudent shall keep silence in that time, for it is an evil time, *Amos 5. 10; 13.* Surely the reproofs or instruction are the way of life, and a wise and faithful reprovor is to be obediently heard, and highly prized; open rebuke is better than secret love, *Prov. 6. 24. & 25. 12. & 27. 5. Psalm 141. 5.* Now therefore when men cannot indure reproof, but hate the light, and come not thereto, lest their deeds should be reprov'd, this greatly incen'seth God, and will cause him to remove faithful reprovors. To this agrees that of the Prophet, *Mic. 2. 6.* with *Isa. 30. 10, 11.* Prophesie ye not, say they to them that prophesie (namely, prophesie not unto us right things (speak to us smooth things, prophesie deceits, get ye out of the way, &c.) they shall not prophesie, that they shall not take shame (that is, God hereby threatens, that either they shall not so prophesie as to cause those haters of reproof to take shame, but they should (while continued) cease to be reprovors of them; or else he would remove those Prophets in testimony of high displeasure, because they to whom they prophesied despised reproof, that they should have no more opportunity to prophesie unto them, no not for ever, that they should not take shame.) This provokes God to take away the speech of the trully or lip of the faithful, and so make men desolate of their glory. This was also contained in the iniquity of that people that heard the words of the Prophet delightfully and frequently, they were still talking against him by the walls, and in the doors of the houses (*viz.* privately secretly, and so as he knew not of it, until the Lord gave him knowledge, and so he knew, and he shewed him their doings, as *Jer. 11. 18. 19.*) and therefore he would deprive them of such a faithful watchman and reprovor, *Ezek. 33. 30, 33.* So much also may be signified in that, *Hos. 4. 4, 5.* where, after the Lord had been declaring the great iniquity of *Israel*, and therefore threatening that the Land should mourn, &c. he adds, yet let no man strive, or reprove another, for thy people are as they that strive with the Priest; they cannot indure to be reprov'd; therefore the Prophet shall fall in the

the night. This hating reproof is an iniquity of such a nature, as in which men do even declare some stiff purpose and resolvedness to continue in the things reprov'd; not a wandering simply, but a loving to wander; it is a sure evidence that a man is out of, and forsakes the way while correction is grievous unto him, while he loves not one that reproveth him, *Prov. 15. 10, 12.* it keeps such an one from going unto, or abiding amongst the wise, the company of such as are wise reprovers is a burden to them, *Prov. 15. 12, 31, 32.* and therefore this persisted in, will at last provoke God to say as he did concerning *Ephraim, Let them alone;* yea, and because their heart is set on their iniquity, and they will not be made clean, give them such teachers as will soothe them up, such as are Prophets of the deceit of their own hearts, that will cry peace, peace unto them, and flatter them, telling them they are the temple of the Lord, and no evil shall come unto them. So he threatens that when his people were come to that bad condition that they would not be reprov'd, but their heart was set on their iniquity, he would so order it in his judgments that there should be like people, like Priests; and that he would herein punish them for their wayes, and reward them their doings, and even chose their delusions, as they could not indure those that spake uprightly, but rather desired and spoke well of those that daubed them up with untemper'd mortar, so he would take away the faithful ones from amongst them, or give them charge to let them alone, and set such over them as would be like unto themselves, and strengthen them in, or not pull them out of their evil way, *Hos. 4. 4, 8, 9, 17.* So also when the house of *Jacob* were come to that pals, that they said to them that prophesie, prophesie not unto us right things, as before, he then threatens this as a judgment to them: *If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lye, saying, I will prophesse unto thee of wine and strong drink; he shall even be the Prophet of this people. Mic. 2. 6, 11.* Oh heavy judgment ordered for a great and heinous iniquity; because men love to be well spoken of, and to whatever crooked path they are walking in, and what will this come to in the issue? as *Jer. 5. 30, 31.* *A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the Land; the Prophets prophesse falsely—and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?* Yea,

Yea and this causeth God to shut out mens prayers, because they hate his reproofs, and his faithful reprovers, and when they cry he will not hear them, but will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings, *Mic. 2. 6, 11. with Chap. 3. 4.* So the Lord threatens; *They shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge and did not chuse the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof; therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, &c. Prov. 1. 28, 29.* So much also may be contained in that Proverb; *Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction,* viz. that regards not reproof, as appears by the latter part of the verse; that is, poverty in spiritual things shall be to such an one, God will put an end to the Harvest, and he shall beg in Winter, and have nothing; poverty shall come upon him as an armed man, and want as one that travelleth. And shame, God will put such to shame, to wit, hide himself from them, and cast them off, and be as one that is asleep, he will lightly esteem them, and though they cry and shout, yet he will shut out their prayers; but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured; God will honour such an one, he will enrich him with durable riches and righteousness, he shall get understanding, and his ear shall be alwayes opened to his cry, *Prov. 13. 18. with Psal. 44. 9, 23, 24. &c. 89. 45, 46. Prov. 15. 32.*

3. More particularly, this provokes God to take away the righteous and faithful ones, because their heart goeth after his covetousness who are hearers of the Word, because such as these love the world, and the things of this world, and go on in pursuing this evil inclination, in oppression or unmercifulness in not doing good to others with what God hath been putting into their hands, *Ezek. 33. 31, 33.* The love of money is the root of all evil, not only of the evil of sin, but also of judgment and affliction; and it appears that the Apostle doth include that also in the evil of which covetousness is the root; for he saith, which while some have covered after they have erred from the faith; (this is a great iniquity, and that which leads to many other iniquities) and pierced themselves with many sorrows (caused much grief, and procured many judgments to themselves) *1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.* So when

when the Prophet had been saying, The righteous perisheth, &c. and merciful men are taken away, the Lord (is I conceive) shews that this was the cause of this judgment: *For the iniquity of his covetousness I was wroth and smote him, I hid me and was wroth, &c.* Isa. 57. 1, 17. This iniquity followed after causeth men to hate faithful reprovers, and so provokes God to take them away, *Mic. 2. 2, 6.* yea, this being inclined unto, and persisted in, and suffered to bring forth its fruits, will even procure that great judgment of depriving such of, or of the usefulness of all faithful helpers, or such as have the words of wisdom fitted in their lips for speaking profitably unto others; so, for this, the Lord threatens, *Amos 8. 3, 13.* *The songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God, &c. Hear this ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the Land to fail, saying, when will the new Moon be gone that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat? (while I will those appointed days and meetings be over, that we may follow and seek after our profit, that we may buy, and sell, and get gain;) making the Ephah small (namely the measure, and so we may lay the weight, or any thing they sell) and the Shekel great (getting as much money as they can, though to the defrauding and over-reaching another, and think this honesty too) and falsifying the balances by deceit, (that they may wrong others, as follows) the Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely I will never forget any of their works; shall not the Land tremble for this? I will turn your feasts into mourning, and your songs into lamentation. And, Behold the dayes come, that I will send a famine in the Land, not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord; and they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.*

Yea this, and its direct fruits, provokes God to shut out mens cries, even the oppressions of those upon whom God's name is called, and their want of pity and mercy; their withholding more then is meet tendeth to poverty, even to poverty in spiritual things; it provokes God to take away or withhold such faithful helps for their growth, as they might have had, and such trusting with the true riches as might have been committed to them; If therefore, saith our Saviour to his Disciples, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous

teou: Mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches; and if ye have not been faithful in that which is another mans, who shall give you that which is your own? This is another given to them for the good of others, and especially that they might communicate to those that teach them in all good things; if they have reaped their spiritual things, their duty is also to Minister unto them in carnal things, *Luk. 16. 9, 12. Gal. 6. 6. Rom. 15. 27.* And (as I was saying) it causeth God to hide his face that he will not hear. To this purpose is that of the Lord by the Prophet *Isaiah: The new Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, or grief, even the solemn Meetings, &c. And when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you, ye when ye make many prayers I will not hear, your hands are full of blood: And what he means by blood, he afterwards explicates and shews to be their oppression, and not shewing mercy to the oppressed and helpless; for he adds, wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow: Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, &c. Isa. 1. 10, 23.* Like whereto is that, *Isa. 58. 3, 12. Wherefore have we fasted say they, and thou seest not, &c. Behold in the day of your fast ye—exact all your labours: Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness?—Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy self from thine own flesh; then shall thy light break forth as the morning—Then thou shalt call, and the Lord shall answer, thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am, &c.* Add hereto also that of the Lord by the Prophet *Zechariah: Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother, and oppress not the widow nor the fatherless; the stranger, nor the poor, &c. but they refused to hearken—yea, they made their hearts as an Adamant stone—therefore it is come to pass, that as he cryed, and they would not hear, so they cryed, and I would not hear, saith the Lord, Zech. 7. 9, 13. He shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy, Jam. 2. 13, 16.*

And

And truly, there might be some intimate reproof of these to whom the Apostle speaks, for being so much inclined to this evil, in that he appeals to them, and saith; *Your selves know that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and those that were with me*; it had been a small thing for him, or those with him to have reaped of their carnal things, who sowed unto them spiritual things, *Act. 20. 33, 34.* with *1 Cor. 4. 11, 12, 14. & 9. 11, 12.* *Eph. 4. 28, 32.* & *5. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6.*

4. And to add no more, when pride is not hidden from the people of God, but they retain high thoughts of themselves by their wisdom, knowledge, gifts and attainments, &c. and go on serving their pride, and bringing forth the fruits thereof in envyings, strifes, contentions, divisions (for only by pride cometh contention, *Prov. 13. 10. & 18. 25.*) and are not with all lowliness endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; this deprives their souls of good; it hinders them from partaking of one anothers grace, and of that delightful and profitable fellowship in the Gospel of Christ they might have enjoyed while they are preserved together in the Land of the living, and causeth them to live as strangers, or separate one from another (*Act. 15. 39.*) and even provokes God to separate them one from another, and in anger to divide them, who could not agree one with another, *Lam. 4. 16.* with *Jer. 9. 4, 8.* *All the Law* saith the Apostle, *is fulfilled in one word, even in this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self; but if ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not consumed one of (or by) another,* *Gal. 5. 14, 15.* For this cause many were sick and weak amongst the Corinthians, and many slept, because they did not discern the Lord's body, namely, they did not highly and honourably esteem of his personal body that was broken, so as therein to consider the infinite grace of God to sinners, and to examine themselves in that perfect Law of liberty, in which the infinite excellency of it is discovered, so as to have pride hidden from them. Or they did not discern his congregational body, so as to esteem them to be of the body of Christ, and every one members in particular, how poor and mean soever, but there were contentions, divisions, strifes and envyings amongst them, and there were some that did shame those that were poor, either in this world, or poor in knowledge or utterance,

and that had not what they had, lifting up themselves by their knowledge, and despising or dealing in proud wrath with others, 1 Cor. 1. 11. & 3. 3. & 8. 1. & 11. 18, 22, 28, 30. 2 Cor. 12. 20. To the same purpose the Apostle speaks to the Philippians, I know I shall continue with you—only let your conversation be as becomes the Gospel of Christ; and what he means by this conversation he himself declares, however as to a great and principal thing in it, to wit, *that ye stand fast in one spirit* (that into which ye have been made to drink) *with one mind, design, affection, and love, striving together, not one against another, &c.* Otherwise they might deprive themselves of the mercy of his being contigued with them; and hence also with powerful arguments beseecheth them, *If therefore there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, &c.* Phil. 1. 25, 27. & 2. 1, 3. So it's said, *They angered Moses at the waters of strife* (where they did things in strife and chod with him) *so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes,* Psal. 106. 32. with Numb. 20. 3.

And this root of pride, and these fruits of it, envy, strife, contention, &c. provoke God to hide his face, that he will not hear. So much (I conceive) the Apostle James signifies; *If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and ye not against the truth.* (say not this is zeal for God) *this wisdom descends not from above—for where envying and strifes are, there is confusion, and every evil work—from whence come wars, and fightings, or brawling among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members.* Ye lust (or eagerly desire) and have not; ye kill (as those also do that despise the poor, Jam. 2. 1, 2, 5, 10, 11.) and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not; ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.—*Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?* but he giveth more grace (whereby we might be preserved from pride, and these envyings and strifes) wherefore he saith, *God resisteth the proud* (that receive not his grace to save them, he puts them at a distance from him, and shuts out their prayes) *but giveth grace to the humble* (that receive his
grace

grace to hide pride from them, and to strengthen them to cease from their own wisdom that descends not from above) *submit your selves therefore to God—Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you, Jam. 3. 14, 16. & 4. 1, 5, 8, 11. Isa. 58. 3, 4.*

Oh, that we may judge our selves, that we be not further judged, and therefore let us examine our selves in the light of God's testimony, and therewith in the light of his judgments; for his judgments are as the light that goeth forth, *Hos. 6. 5.* and not in the light of our own heart, for the heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked, and he that trusteth in it is a fool, *Jer. 17. 9. Prov. 28. 26. All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits, Prov. 16. 2. & 21. 2. with Chap. 12. 15.*

But now in the perfect Law of liberty, as in a true glass, we may see our hearts, it gives light for discovering all things, and it gives understanding to the simple, or capacity to behold what is manifested, so wonderful are God's testimonies, and especially the entrance of God's word, even the word of the beginning of Christ, the first thing to be declared, and which enters the heart, and is the entrance for our understanding all things, the key of knowledge for opening all things to us, *Psal. 119. 129, 130. The commandment is a lamp, and the Law light, and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life, Prov. 6. 24.* His testimony doth so discern and discover all things, as that he that is an hearer of the word and not a doer hath this great advantage put into his hand, he beholdeth himself (the secrets of his heart are made manifest, as *1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.* but then this is his great evil and iniquity, because he is not willing to take shame to himself, and to continue beholding his spots which are discovered in the glass, therefore he shuts the light) and goeth his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. This was brought to his view by the word of truth, and the discovery was made, and advantage given him by that; now therefore departing from that, he immediately lets slip what an one he was there manifested to be, and is now ready to think and say, he is not polluted, or hath not such spots as before in the glass he beheld himself to have, *Jam. 1. 23, 24.* In that word of truth then let us examine our selves, and search and try our

our wayes, even narrowly search them, and consider them; our wayes, and not God's wayes so as to search for some unrighteousness, or unevnness in them; for his wayes are equal, the Lord our God is righteous in all he hath brought upon us. And, our wayes, as distinguished from other mens wayes; so as to lay the blame on them; for if we had been, or were willing to judge our selves, we should not have been, or should not yet further be judged.

Yea, wish that light also let us examine our selves in and by the judgments he hath been ordering to us; for many times he doth so bring his judgments to light as that he plainly reveals our sin, and writes it upon the rod, in doing to us what we have done to others, *Judg.* 1. 7. Or in taking away those mercies which we have abused, or neglected, *1 Sam.* 2. 39, 34. *Hos.* 2. 8, 9. And however, he doth so open mens ears when he afflicts them, that they might hear the rod, and who hath appointed it, and so seal home their instruction, which they are to receive, that they in considering their wayes, as he is helping them so to do, might see wherefore he is correcting them; and therefore he looketh upon men (who looks not to gather grapes of thorns, nor expects men should do impossibilities) and if any man say, I have sinned and perverted that which was right, &c. implying this they might do, *Job* 33. 16, 28. When the righteous are holden in cords of affliction, then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded; he openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they depart from iniquity, *Job* 36. 8, 10. *Mic.* 6. 9. *1 Cor.* 11. 28, 31.

In this light of the Lord then in both considerations let us consider our selves and wayes, and not lean to our own wisdom, for that will pervert us, and lead us to say, because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn away from me, *1/4.* 47. 10. *Jer.* 2. 35. And let us not make our selves of the number, or compare our selves with some that commend themselves, for they measuring themselves by themselves (by what sometimes they were) and compassing themselves amongst themselves (namely, viewing and considering what others are, they are ready to say and conclude, God I thank thee, I am not like other men, but herein they) are not wise, *1 Cor.* 10. 12. Surely we may in this light see that there have

have been great provocations found generally with us, which have provoked God thus highly to lift up his hand, and to be angry with the prayers of his people, and so to testifie displeasure as to remove such an one who was an instrument of such general usefulness in the societies of God's people, and God is even in this breach saying unto us, as he did to his people of old, *To have all transgressed against me*, Jer. 2. 29. and therefore he gives us all to eat of the fruit of our wayes and doings. So when God was angry with *Moses*, it went ill with him for the peoples sake, even for the sin of the congregation, *Deut. 3. 26*. So when God made that breach upon them in taking away *Azazel*, the Prophet acknowledgeth this was the reason, because they (generally) sought him not after the due order, *1 Chron. 19. 13*. So when *Josiah* was removed, it was because the people were generally polluted; *The crown, saith the Prophet, is fallen from our head, we know as that we have sinned for this our heart is faint*, *2 King. 23. 25, 30*. *Lam. 5. 16, 17*. *1 Cor. 11. 29, 31*. Yea, and not only so, not only have we generally sinned, but (as before was hinted) our sins have been very sinful, we have added rebellion to our sin: Such an account the Prophet gives of the sin of himself and his people, when God did slay, and not pity; *Let us, saith he, search and try our wayes*, &c. And when he comes to give an account of them, he saith, *We have transgressed and have rebelled*; not only departed out of the way, and wandered, but done so against light: yea, and this hath been multiplied also; *He hath wounded us with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one* (in slaying and not pitying, when we cried and shouted) *for the multitude of our iniquities, because our sins were increased*, *Lam. 2. 40, 42*. *Jer. 30. 14*. Oh house of *Israel*, come ye then, and let us walk in the light of the Lord, that we may behold our selves and wayes, and bear his indignation, for we have sinned against him, *Isa. 2. 5*. And though we might be ready to say, there may be many other evils than those forementioned, which may have provoked God, yet (though this be true) let us not so say, that we may plead our innocency; and seek to hide our guiltiness of these evils, for surely so much is generally spoken, as may include any particular, but as in this light we are discovered, let us as such judge our selves.

Have we not been unprofitable hearers of the word of truth,

truth, the Gospel of our salvation? Have we not too much imprisoned it in unrighteousness, and either retained the things this came to redeem us from, or hindered it from bringing forth its fruits in us and through us? Hath not his heritage been unto him as a speckled bird? Are there not many spots upon us which are not the spots of his children? Have we not contented our selves with sitting before God as his people, and hearing his words delightfully, and yet have been polluted either with the lusts of the flesh, pampering our selves with the best, feeding without fear, and so with surfeiting, drunkenness, uncleanness, &c. or with the desires of the mind, the wisdom of this world, the friendship of this world, praise of men, and fashioning our selves according to our former lusts in our ignorance; yea exceeding our condition and manner, before the grace of God was received by us, in the fashions of this world, and decking our selves in gold or silver, or costly array, or sprucing up our selves; and so consuming upon our lusts what was put into our hand for a better end, as if this did tend to adorn the Gospel? in short, have we not believed in vain, and loved darkness rather than light, after light hath been vouchsafed?

Or have we not dealt foolishly, and been so wroth with the reproofs of instruction, and counted the wise reprover our enemy, because he hath told us the truth, and taken offence at him, and the light also, because we were not suffered to find pleasure in our unrighteousness? Have we not, when we have been dealt faithfully withal, said in our hearts, or with our tongues, ye take too much upon you; and counted those that have spoken uprightly, busy-bodies in other mens matters, proud, censorious, &c. that we might do what is good, and right in our own eyes? Have we not even in our hearts been ready to say with him, *There is one Micahiah by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him, for he doth not prophesie good concerning me, but evil?* 1 King. 22. 8. Surely such iniquity hath also been found.

Have we not been setting our hearts upon the world, and the things thereof, that we might heap up for our selves, and shut up the bowels of our compassion, when the needs of our brethren have been presented to us, and God working in us both to will and to do? Have not those that have gone before

us in the word of the Lord had too much cause to say to some; *Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us—ye are honourable, but we are despised; we hunger and thirst—and labour, working with our own hands; and too little cause to say of any, their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. Oh that there were not cause generally to say, from the least to the greatest, Every one is given to covetousness.* How few are there that have been willing to promote the Gospel of Christ to their power, and have been faithful in the least things?

Yea, and how much have we been walking in pride and high thoughts of our selves, and in those fruits of it, such as anger, wrath, divisions, contentions, debates, whisperings, &c. Lord, be merciful unto me, heal my soul, for I have sinned.

Doubtless the thus examining our selves in the light of the Lord is a more meet exercise for us to be exercised unto, than to cry out of the affliction simply. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin? it is the punishment of his sin that he suffers, why doth he complain for the punishment, and mean time too much forget that which procures it? *Let us search and try our ways,* this is a more meet exercise for us, *Lev. 3. 39, 40.* Why cryest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity, because thy sins were increased I have done these things to thee, saith the Lord, *Jer. 30. 15.* See what God saith to *Joshua* when he rent his cloaths, fell to the earth upon his face—and said, *Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us?—What wilt thou do unto thy great name? and the Lord said unto Joshua, get thee up, wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? (complaining of the affliction) Israel hath sinned, and they have transgressed—up, sanctifie the people, &c.* As if he should say, is there not a cause for what I have done? am I not provoked hereto? up and be doing, in searching and diligently inquiring what that is that hath procured these things unto you, and sanctifie your selves, *Josh. 7. 7, 10, 15.* So the Lord saith to his people when he was judging of them, because his house lay waste, and they run every man to his own house; or as now, since grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, all sough

their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your wayes; ye have sown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your wayes,* Hag. 1. 5; 7. 9. Phil. 2. 21.

And in and with our searching, and trying our wayes, let us turn again unto the Lord whom we have revolted, *Lam. 3. 40.* Let us not listen unto the deceitfulness of sin in us, which is the indeavouring to slay us, so as to harden our hearts and say, there is no hope, the case is desperate, we have loved strangers, and after them we will go, *Jer. 2. 25.* though we have done all this wickedness, yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart, and turn ye not aside, for then should ye go after vain things which cannot profit, nor deliver, for they are vain, *1 Sam. 12. 20, 25.* even turn unto him from our iniquities, acknowledging, and confessing them as reprov'd, and discovered, and lay them apart in the light and strength of his grace. And to move hereto.

Remember how great things he hath done for us when we were dead in sins and trespasses, and justly banished from his presence in the righteous sentence of his Law; he then remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever, and devised a blessed means that his banished might not be utterly and for ever expelled from him; hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end: Behold, he hath given his Son for a witness to the people of the greatness and sincerity of his love to us; let us then remember that Jesus Christ who was delivered for us all, was raised from the dead according to the Gospel; and let us feed upon that bread, even his flesh that was given for the life of the world. This will encourage us to search and try our wayes, and to turn to him against whom we have sinned.

And herewith also consider that there is mercy with the Lord, and with him is plenteous redemption through his blood; even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of God's grace, *Eph. 1. 7.* there is forgiveness with him, not that we should continue in sin that grace may abound, but that he may be feared, *Psal. 130. 3, 4, 7.* even forgiveness of the sins reprov'd, and washing, and cleansing from them. Oh, let us then turn unto him and say, take a way

away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, heal our backslidings, and love us freely; he is merciful and will not keep anger for ever, only let us acknowledge our iniquity, that we have transgressed against him. This is powerful to purge guile out of our spirits, and preserve us from it, which leads us to keep silence, and to hide, that we may hold fast the things reprov'd, that he is a God ready to pardon; and for this cause shall every one that is godly pray unto him in a time of finding, *Psal. 32. 2, 6. Neh. 9. 17.* In this encouragement let us yet look again toward his holy Temple, *Josiah 2. 2, 7.*

Yea, consider that the end of the Lord is gracious in ordering such great judgments, while it is called to day, and so much the Apostle particularly signifies when he had been saying, *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*—He adds; *But when we are judged* (namely with such judgments, and that because we have not timely judged our selves) *we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world,* 1 Cor. 11. 30, 32. His end herein is good, that he might awaken us to his righteousness, and cause us to arise from the dead, that Christ may give us light, that he may keep back our souls from the pit, and we may be enlightened with the light of the living. And it is infinitely better to be now judged, and to submit to him therein, and bear patiently his indignation, than to be condemned hereafter, and sentenced to, and punished in that lake, where their worm dyeth not, and their fire is not quenched.

Yea, in thus searching and trying our wayes, and turning unto him in the encouragement of the multitude of his mercies, humbling our selves before him, and confessing our villainies and sinfulness; hereby we shall ascribe righteousness to our Maker, and give glory to him. *My son, said Joshua, give, I pray thee glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and tell what thou hast done, hide it not,* Josh. 7. 19. While men are pleading their innocency, or hiding their sin, and crying out only of the affliction, they therein endeavour to disannul his judgment, and condemn him that they may be righteous, *Job 40. 8.* whereas in a right examining our selves in the light of the Lord, and taking shame to our selves, as it appears thereby to belong to us, and so hum-

bling ourselves, we shall herein rightly glorifie him, and acknowledge that he is righteous in all he hath brought upon us, and that he hath not done without a cause all he hath done in the midst of us; yea, that he hath not laid upon us more than is meet, or was needful to seal home our instruction, and make us partakers of his end in afflicting us, *2 Chron. 12. 6. Neh. 9. 33. Job 34. 23. Dan. 9. 7, 14.* yea, we shall have cause abundantly to confels, and acknowledge to his praise, that he hath not in thus afflicting us dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; but hath punished less than our iniquities deserve, *Psal. 103. 9, 10. Eze. 9. 13.* It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not, *Lam. 3. 18, 22.* This will strengthen us to say, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, Mic. 7. 9.*

Yea, consider that there is mercy with him, as to forgive our iniquities, and heal our backslidings, so also to make up our losses, and repair our breaches; yea, though our breach be like the great Sea, and none can heal it; though our bruise be incurable, and wound grievous, and there are with us no healing Medicines, yet he can, and in returning to him will, restore health unto us and heal us of our wounds, *Jer. 30. 12, 13, 17. Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death—Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most high; therefore he brought down their heart with labour, they fell down and there was none to help; then they cryed unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses: He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death—Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness—for he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder. And, who so is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord. Plal. 107. 19, 16, 43.* Oh that we may not be tempting God, and limping the holy one of Israel, and say, can he help us? can he repair our breaches? but consider what he hath done already, and in that encouragement, and as that is working in us both to will and to do; Come and let us return to the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up, *Hos. 6. 1, 2. Isa. 57. 1, 15, 18. Levit. 26. 40, 42.*

Yea,

Yea, and be we admonished to examine our selves, and to return to him in confessing our sins, lest we provoke him to make further breaches upon us, lest his soul depart from us, and he make us utterly desolate of our glory, *Jer. 6. 8.* For if we be not reformed by these liftings up of his hand, but still walk contrary to him, he will proceed in walking contrary to us, and will yet punish us, *Levis. 26. 21, 24.* such like strokes as these are not only great judgments in themselves, but also fore-runners of greater; so when the Prophet was declaring the greatness of such a judgment as in which there was none to guide *Jerusalem* among all the sons she had brought forth; namely, that it was an heavy testimony of God's displeasure, such as in which she had drank at the Lord's hand, the cup of his fury, the dregs of the cup of trembling wrung out; he then signifies that this was also the forerunner and concomitant of greater judgments, therefore he adds, *These two things are come unto thee, who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine (viz. that also of hearing of the words of the Lord) and the sword, &c. Isa. 31. 17, 19.* [See what our Brother hath spoken more largely to this purpose, in lamentation over the dead in Christ, Page 30; 33, 37, 38. and in breach upon breach, page 8, 12.] And so much the Apostle here signifies; I know, saith he, *that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in amongst you, not sparing the flock, &c. ver. 29, 30.* Oh that the consideration of all might awaken us to gather our selves together, before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon us, before the day of the Lords anger come upon us, that we may seek the Lord, seek righteousness and meekness, that either he may graciously turn away his anger and judgments further threatned; or however we may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger, *Zeph. 2. 13. Amos 4. 2, 12.*

2. He now commits these to God, and the word of his grace, that they might take heed to themselves, and to the flock, to feed them; as *ver. 28.* And so for instruction to them, and to such as now go before others in the word of the Lord, yea to all that are faithful in the Lord, that, to the end they may edifie themselves and one another, they commit themselves to this person and thing, quietly leave themselves with

with the great Shepherd, and the Word of his grace, expecting helpfulness herein, even wisdom, strength, and direction to all their service, for in Christ as declared in the Gospel, they may be furnished unto every good word and work; in this person and thing to which he commends them, they might be every way furnished for feeding and edifying themselves, and one another; in Christ as manifested in the word, and so in the word of Christ, there is given matter wherewith to feed; instruction to the manner how to feed, and motive to move hereto.

1. Matter wherewith to feed, namely to nourish them up with the words of faith (in which Christ is declared to be the Author and finisher of the faith) and of good doctrine, *1 Tim.* 4. 6. that they might grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *1 Pet.* 3. 18. the thing wherewith they might feed them, it was the Gospel of Christ, as opened according to the revelation of the mystery, in which is the sincere milk, whereby men may grow, and be nourished up, *1 Pet.* 2. 2. And so the Apostle in this his exercise in directing them on such an occasion, to God & the word of his grace, was a follower of God, & gave such instruction to these, as God gave to the leaders of the people in former times, to whom he said, *This is the rest* (even that foundation laid in Zion) *where ye may cause the weary to rest*; and this is the refreshing; namely, that matter wherewith they might refresh those to whom they spake, in directing them to the vision of all, even to Jesus Christ as he was witnessed in the Law and the Prophets, *Isa.* 28. 12, 16. These are Pastors after God's own heart, that feed with knowledge, viz. with the doctrine of Christ, and with understanding; with skillfulness in the word of God's righteousness, *Jer.* 3. 15. To this then he commits them as to that wherewith they might do all their work; for the Gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth. So the Apostle charges *Timothy*, *Preach the word* (namely, the Word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation) *be instant in season, out of season*, *2 Tim.* 4. 2. And this he determined to know amongst the *Corinthians*, even Jesus Christ and him crucified, as the one thing for and unto all things. *1 Cor.* 2. 2. Yea, this our Saviour commanded his Apostles to preach the Gospel, as the one thing in and unto their

their whole work of discipling, *Mat. 28. 19, 20. Mark 16. 15. Luk. 24. 46, 48.* and so they did preach, even Jesus Christ, and not themselves, or the Law, *Rom. 10. 8. Act. 10. 41.* yea, our Lord Jesus the great peace-maker; and peace-preacher, was anointed with the holy Ghost to preach the Gospel, *1/4. 61. 1, 3. Luk. 4. 18.* And it's the work and office of the holy Ghost to bear witness of Christ, to glorifie Christ, and therewith to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and to guide the believers into all truth, and to shew them things to come, *Joh. 16. 8, 14.* Surely this word of God's grace is a compleat doctrine, both to opening the eyes of the blind, and turning to the Lord, and for perfecting them that do believe, so as there is no need for preaching the Law, either at first to prepare men for Christ, or afterwards, to perfect that by the flesh which was begun by the Spirit: In Christ, as declared in the testimony, ye are compleat, &c. *Col. 2. 3, 10.* Nor is the Law in the use of it good, unless it be lawfully used, according to the glorious Gospel, *1 Tim. 1. 7, 8, 11.*

This is that food then wherewith they might feed, even with the Gospel of Christ, in which is (spiritually given to us his flesh, which is meat indeed, and his blood which is drink indeed; and so here they might be instruments of causing the flock to lye down in green pastures; this God, even our God, being alwayes with this word of his grace, in the plain and faithful ministration of it, to give himself to us to feed upon, even his flesh which he hath given for the life of the world. And so in green pastures, *Psal. 23. 2.* namely, such as are delightful and pleasant to the eye, and sweet to the taste, sweeter than honey, and the honey comb, *Psal. 119. 7, 10. & 119. 103.* And such as are fruitful, and which cause growth, and increase, that from the head all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministred, and knit together, may increase with the increase of God, *Col. 2. 19.* For this bread of life cometh down, and is given to us in this Gospel of grace, so as that while *Paul* planteth, and *Apollō* watereth, God giveth the increase, the feeding that is in this word of his grace is not dry, like the heath in the wildernels, but that which hath sap in it, and in which the Lord is the dew unto his *Israel*, to cause them to revive as the corn, and flourish.

rich like the Palm-tree, and grow like a Cedar in *Lubnan*, *Psal.* 92. 12, 15. *Hes.* 14. 5, 6. 2 *Thes.* 1. 3. And green pastures, such as are not souled and sullied, but this word is very pure, it is a wholsom word, *Psal.* 12. 6. & 119. 140. there is no lye of it, 1 *Joh.* 2. 27. every word of God is pure, *Prov.* 30. 4, 6. Though men may corrupt the word of God in their interpretations, and glosses, and meanings which they put upon it, yet it is pure in it self, and he hath kept it, and will preserve it so in the records of it, that we may safely feed thereon, and therewith: And green, even tender, and easie of digestion for the weakest, milk for babes as well as strong meat for those that are strong; yea, such an abundance of feeding here is, that the flock may lye down, as satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and lye down and still feed; and such security in those pastures, as they may lye down, and none shall make them afraid, *Jer.* 23. 4. Herein also they might instrumentally direct them to the still waters, to give refreshing to their thirsty souls, even to him who is the fountain of living waters, in whom is forgiveness of sins, and fullness of spirit, who is filled with grace and truth, in whom is, and who gives water of life which causeth fatness and fruitfulness, and gives satisfying, so as he that drinketh hereof shall never thirst; yea, their soul shall be as a watered garden, and as springs of water whose waters fail not, *Joh.* 4. 10, 14. *Isa.* 58. 11. and these are still waters, even the consolations of Christ as given in the Gospel, like the waters of *Shiloh* that run softly, and make no noise in the world: This doctrine of the grace of God is not like the divers and strange doctrines of men, which make a noise like the noise of many waters, and who have the wisdom of this world, excellency of speech, strength of reason, consent of fathers, approbation of great ones, and power on their sides, which makes them appear so strong as if they would carry all before them; but this is the weakness of God, and foolishness of God, and that which being declared in the words which the holy Ghost hath taught, is every where spoken against, *Isa.* 8. 6, 7. 1 *Cor.* 1. 25. *1st.* 28. 23. And yet still waters in their effect, that whereby God doth and will still and quiet the enemy and the avenger, *Psal.* 8. 2. confound the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nought the understanding of the prudent, and

and will make them quiet, that they shall have nothing to say, *Ab. 6. 10.* the weapons of this warfare are mighty through God, to the pulling down strong holds, casting down imaginations, &c. *2 Cor. 10. 4. 5.* yea, still waters, waters of quietness, in their efficacy to any, and every one that takes and drinks of this water of life, which any one may do freely, *Isa. 55. 1.* *Rev. 22. 17.* they give quietness to the soul, cause it to dwell at ease, *Psal. 25. 13.* cool its thirst, quiet its fears, still the clamours of sin, deliver from the fears of God's wrath, and make quiet from the fear of all evil, adversity and tribulation, so as in Christ they have peace while they have tribulation in the world, *Joh. 16. 33.* yea, through grace in the hope set before them, they have everlasting consolations, which are as the waters of *Noah*, of rest and quietness; for as he hath sworn that the waters of *Noah* shall no more go over the earth, so he hath sworn that he will not be wroth with his flock, nor rebuke them: For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but his kindness shall not depart from them, &c. *Isa. 54. 9, 11.* yea, and hereby they might be instruments of restoring the soul from its wanderings and goings astray, and so from its diseases thereby contracted, its death, ignorance, leanness and barrenness, its witheredness, &c. *Ezek. 34. 4.* the Law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul, *Psal. 19. 7.* *Gal. 6. 1.* *Jam. 5. 20.*

In and with this Gospel they might warn and admonish of all that is evil, *Col. 1. 28.* reprove when need requires; they are the reproofs of instruction which are the way of life, *Prov. 6. 24.* rebuke sharply and openly, when men are stubborn and unruly, while they will hear, and when they sin openly; and exhort to love and good works: this being the word of exhortation in and with which they may exhort to all, *1 Thes. 4. 18.* *2 Tim. 3. 15, 16.* &c. *4. 2.*

2. As to the manner of feeding the flock, the Apostle *Peter* gives instruction thereabout, in *1 Pet. 5. 2, 3.* Nor by constraining, as matter of necessity and duty only, to do it because you must do it, *1 Cor. 9. 17.* but willingly and cheerfully, as moved thereto by the grace of God, *2 Cor. 5. 14.* not for filthy lucre, or doing it out of covetousness, to enrich your selves thereby, though the labourer is worthy of his reward,

reward, yet that should not be the endaimed at, to feed themselves, and cloath themselves, *Ezek.* 34. 2, 3. The Apostle herein approved himself as a Minister of Christ; he coveted no mans silver, or gold, or apparell, *1 Theſ.* 2. 5. *Act.* 20. 33. but of a forward ready mind, a willing forward mind, though others should with-hold more than is meet.

Neither as being Lords over God's Heritage, or Clergy, exercising authority over them, or as seeking to have dominion over their faith, but as ensamples to the flock, being examples of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, *1 Tim.* 4. 12. in all things shewing themselves patterns of good works, *Tir.* 2. 1, 7.

Yea, to preach the Gospel, and to feed the believers with the sincere milk of the word, and not to corrupt the word of God by mixing therewith the excellency of speech, or of wisdom; for however pleasing to the flesh this is, and whatever good thereby they may think to do that use it, yet certainly, though men do preach the Gospel, while it is done with wisdom of words, it makes the Cross of Christ of none effect, *1 Cor.* 1. 17. it pleaseth God by the foolishness of preaching, even by that plain and faithful commending and proclaiming the Cross of Christ, which is without the wisdom of this world, to save them that believe, and so to feed them, and build them up, *1 Cor.* 1. 21. though this manner of preaching the Gospel be to them that perish (wander out of the way of understanding) foolishness, yet to the saved it is the power of God, *ver.* 18. And hence the Apostle when he came to the *Corinthians*, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom declaring the testimony of God, for he determined to know nothing among them (who were rich in knowledge and utterance) but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, *1 Cor.* 2. 1, 2, 7. And oh that this were considered both by them that teach others, and by them that are taught.

By them that teach others, that they might deny themselves, and lay aside the use of their wisdom in preaching the Gospel, both in word, and in their writings; for it renders them in both very unfruitful and unsuccessful; and thus they reap as the fruit of their evil, in leaning to the wisdom of this world; for herein they endeavour to build what God hath resolved to destroy, and to make something of that
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which he hath purposed to bring to nought, *1 Cor. 1. 19, 20.* and while they walk contrary to God herein, it provokes God to walk contrary to them, and to with-hold his presence and blessing from them, so as they bring forth little or no fruit. Or if men do receive the testimony of Christ declared by them, their faith stands in their wisdom, and not in the power of God, and so the word of God worketh not effectually in them, *1 Cor. 2. 1, 5. 1 Thes. 2. 13.* *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and base things of the world, and things that are despised hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.* Those whom he chuses and makes partakers of this heavenly calling to minister unto him, and serve him in his Temple, and who do worthily in the Ministry, they are babes and sucklings generally, and not the wise and prudent; yea, all of them are such as he either finds or makes fools: And therefore let no man deceive himself (whether he be such an one as hath only natural parts, or whether he be such an one as hath by study and industry acquired some skill in the wisdom of this world, let him not think that by his wisdom he can find out the mind of God, or be profitable to others, but) *if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool (not lean to his own understanding, but cease from his own wisdom) that he may be wise, for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, Mar. 11. 25. 1 Cor. 1. 26, 29. Prov. 3. 5. & 23. 4. 1 Cor. 3. 18, 19.* This way or manner of preaching the Gospel, namely, with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, it is very unprofitable and hurtful; and men are making use of it, partly from a jealousy of the Gospel of Christ, as if it were not the power of God to salvation as declared in the words of the holy Ghost, but needs somewhat else to be added to it to make it forcible; *But he that hath my word, saith the Lord, let him speak my word faithfully, what is the chaff to the wheat? is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord? and like an hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?* Jer. 23. 28, 29. and partly they are incited hereto, and strengthened herein by desires of vain glory, and that they may be accounted wise and men of parts, and have respect and applause; and therefore unless

the grace of God be so received as to purge out that jealousy, and those desires, we shall not cease from our own wisdom, for vain man would be wise; but by committing our selves to God, and the word of his grace, we may be helped to become fools, and so to be crucified to the world, and not matter though we be accounted unlearned & ignorant men, and such as have never learned, which is part of the Cross of Christ that is to be taken up and born by us, *Joh. 7. 15. AB. 4. 13.* This wisdom is part of the goodliness of the flesh, the glory of man, which the spirit in the testimony is withering. Oh that he might be suffered to have his perfect work in us.

And oh that this were considered by them that are taught, that that manner of preaching the Gospel which is with wisdom of words, makes the Cross of Christ of none effect, when men receive the word of God as the word of men, and their faith stands in the wisdom of man; that is, they hear it with delight, and credit it, because such as bring it to them are furnished, and come with excellency of speech, or of wisdom; though it is the word of God that is received, yet it works not effectually in them, *1 Thes. 2. 13. 1 Cor. 2. 5.* And truly we all need to be admonished of this evil, for men naturally love and admire the wisdom of this world; and oh that there were not too much cause to say that many of God's people are too much polluted with this iniquity. If a man be made willing to become a fool for Christ's sake in declaring the testimony, how ready is he to be despised, and lightly esteemed: Whereas if another be wise in Christ, and exalt himself, this they can suffer gladly, and love to have it so, and strengthen those that so teach them in this evil way, while they weaken the hands of others, *1 Cor. 4. 10. 2 Cor. 11. 20.* Oh let us all beware of the enticing words of man's wisdom, and so of Philosophy, &c. for in Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him we are complete, *Col. 2. 2, 4, 8, 10.*

3. And in this to which the Apostle commits them, there is contained motive for feeding; that which is powerful to strengthen to seek the good of men generally, and especially the good of the flock of Christ. As to say,

2. Herein they may behold the infinite grace of Jesus Christ,

Christ, and God in him, toward every sinful soul of mankind, and that he is not willing any man should perish, but that all should come to repentance, as is wonderfully evidenced in this, that Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man: Oh how will this constrain to indeavout the good of men, and especial good of believers. *The love of Christ constrains us*, saith the Apostle, *because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again.* This judgment received by them, did powerfully move them to perfwade men, and they could not but speak the things they had seen and heard, *2 Cor. 5. 11, 13. Act. 4. 19, 20.* This love of God known and believed with the heart, effects in them that so receive it, an hearty desire and prayer to God that they may be saved, who are ignorant of, and enemies to the righteousness of God; it fram's them to some like mindedness with their heavenly father, and causeth their hearts to burn within them in an ardent affection to, and desire of the good of those that are ignorant and out of the way, *1 Joh. 4. 14, 16. Luke 24. 26, 27, 32. Jer. 20. 9.* Whereas others that have not received this judgment, that one died for all and rose again, what appearance of zeal and devotion soever they have, yet the love of Christ doth not constrain hereto; but either they do what they do, that they may have praise of men; or out of a desire of filthy lucre, or to establish a righteousness to themselves; yea, and this judgment received and believed, is the bottom, ground and motive to move them that have it, to feed the flock of Christ, to pray them to be (further) reconciled to God, and not to receive his grace in vain, *2 Cor. 5. 14, 19. 2. & 6. 1.* their hearts are purified in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto the unfeigned love of the brethren, *1 Pet. 1. 22.* And so,

2. They have this further motive to move them to feed the Church, that they are Christ's flock, the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood; not only hath he given himself a ransom to God for them, as he hath done for all; but he so evidenced the preciousness of his blood to them, in the peace and atonement which he thereby made, in the victory thereby obtained, in the righteousness thereby

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compleated, in the fulness of grace and truth thereby received in the New Testament, and everlasting Covenant thereby confirmed, as that they, not being disobedient to the heavenly call, were hereby redeemed unto God, and what things were formerly gain to them, these they counted loss for Christ, and so were made of the chosen generation, and of his flock in a peculiar consideration, being all baptized into one body, and made to drink into one spirit, called in one hope of their calling, &c. such as Christ loves with peculiar manner of love, and frames those that receive his grace to the same mind, even to do good to all, but especially to the household of faith, *Gal. 6. 10.* to love one another with a pure heart fervently, *1 Pet. 1. 22.* and so to be followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ hath loved them, *Eph. 5. 1, 2.* This is a great motive for a servant to love and seek the good of such as are his Lord's children, and such as he delights in. So *Peter* from this motive exhorts the Elders; *Feed the flock of God that is among you, 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3.* yea, and in that they are his flock, there is contained in it this further encouragement, that he will bless and assist their helpers, and be with them in the faithful declaration of the Gospel unto the end of the world, *Mar. 28. 18, 20.* *For who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges?* yea, these had some oversight of the flock committed to them, and it is required of Stewards, that a man be found faithful, and the shepherd will require the flock at their hands, *Ezek. 34. 10.* Oh, let such take heed therefore to themselves, and to all the flock, that they may be pure from the blood of all men. Nay, surely in their places, and according to their capacity, all the holy brethren are partakers of the heavenly calling, though not all chosen into office; and the grace of God doth instruct them, and God their Shepherd doth furnish them that they may edifie one another on their most holy faith, *Jude 20, 21. 1 Thes. 5. 11. Rom. 15. 14.* The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every one of the chosen generation to profit withal, and they ought to be teachers who are faithful in the Lord, *1 Cor. 12. 7. Heb. 3. 1. & 5. 12.* and it is required of them to look diligently, lest any man fall of the grace of God, *Heb. 12. 15.*

3. To move hereto also, our God hath in the word of his grace set great encouragement before them, that when the great shepherd shall appear, they that have fed the flock faithfully, or who shall be reputed graciously so to have done, shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, *1 Pet. 5. 1, 4.* he will then say to such, *Well done good and faithful servant, &c.* Oh, then blessed will that servant be, whom the Lord when he comes shall find so doing, viz. giving to his household their portion of meat in due season. Of *arrish*, saith our Saviour, *I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.* *Mat. 25. 21, 23. Luke 19. 17. &c. 12. 42, 44. Dan. 12. 3.*

And on the other hand, wo will be to them that have received the word of reconciliation; if they hold not forth the word of life in word and conversation, but abuse their talent, or hide it in a napkin, the Lord will be terrible to them. Oh, that therefore knowing the terror of the Lord, they may labour, that whether present or absent, they may be accepted of him, *Luke 12. 45, 48. Mat. 25. 24, 30. 1 Cor. 9. 16. 2 Cor. 5. 9, 11.*

Yea, and to provoke these, to whom he speaks, to feed the flock, and therefore to commit themselves to God; and the word of his grace, he adds, *ver. 29. I know that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock;* and this leads us to the next general head proposed, viz. That he doth commit them all to God and the word of his grace.

2. For their preservation, that they might not be destroyed or moved from the faith by such as would endeavour it; but might trust in God before the sons of men.

By [*grievous Wolves*] is here meant as is before said.

1. Violent persons, who endeavour by force and cruelty to scatter the flock, and cause them to flee as a Bird to their Mountain, to cast in their lot among them; for this is the end of their persecutions, and secret speech of all their cruelty, *Psal. 11. 1, 2.* these are called Wolves, *Mat. 10. 16, 23. Luke 10. 3.* And so the Psalmist speaking of the wicked that persecute the poor, saith, *His wayes are alwayes grievous;* and in such grievous wayes they walk, because of their evil thoughts, as is there said; *God is not in all his thoughts:* Of, all his

his thoughts are, *there is no God*; and hence, his wayes are alwayes grievous, and Gods judgments (both of his mouth and hand) are far above out of his sight: Those wayes and persons walking therein, are grievous to God, they grieve him at the heart, and they are grievous to the congregation of Gods poor ones, *Psal. 10. 4, 5, 9.* So it is said of those oppressive and cruel rulers, even amongst those on whom God's name was called, they decree unrighteous decrees, and write grievousness, which they have prescribed, *Isa. 10. 1. Psal. 31. 18.* yea, and Princes and Judges, in the professed Church, were for their cruelty compared to Wolves, *Ezek. 22. 27. Zeph. 3. 3.*

2. Hereby is also signified false Prophets that come to corrupt from the simplicity that is in Christ, and the voice of whole instructions, which cause to err from the words of knowledge in sum, is, stollen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret places is pleasant, *Prov. 9. 17.* who commend unto us som what which is not the bread which wisdom hath prepared, for that is the flesh of Christ which he hath given for the life of the world, *Prov. 9. 5, 17. Job. 6. 51.* such are called Wolves, as *Mat. 7. 15. Beware of false Prophets that come to you in sheeps cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves.* So those that come with a strange voice from that of Christs, those thieves and robbers that come not in by the door, these are compared to Wolves, and do come to catch and scatter the sheep, *John 10. 1, 5, 10, 12.* And herein both violent and deceitful persons agree, they are both enemies to, and such as will not spare the flock.

Now then, that they might be preserved from the fear and terror of the former, and the deceit and subtilty of the latter, he commits them to God, and the word of his grace; thereby giving us to understand, that the name of the Lord is a strong tower, and those that run into it shall be set on high, *Prov. 18. 10.* according to that, *Whose bearketh unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil.* *Prov. 1. 33.* And so the Apostle, when he forewarns Timothy, *That all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution; and that evil men (persecutors) and seducers (false Prophets) shall increase more and worse.* He adds, *But continue thou in the things thou hast learned, (of God in the word of his grace) this will pro-*
serve

serve thee from the evil of the violence of the one, and cunning craftiness of the other, 2.Tim. 3. 12, 14.

1. Then, the Apostle here commits them to God, and the word of his grace, with desire they should commit themselves to him and it, and be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and so rest in the Lord, expecting his gracious preservation of them from the hurt of those grievous violent Wolves, and waiting patiently for him, enduring hardships as good Soldiers of Christ Jesus, not being afraid of the terror of persecutors, neither being troubled or hindered from holding fast the profession of their faith, *2.Tim. 2. 1, 3. Psalm. 37. 7. 1.Pet. 3. 14.*

And in this he signifies to us, that there is good cause and encouragement to commit our selves to God, and the word of his grace, when he is taking away eminent and faithful instruments, and suffering grievous wolves to enter in: At such a time, in the Lord we may praise his word, and be strong in him, and the power of his might. Now especially, when the godly man ceaseth, the wicked then insult and say: Seeing the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? now they cry, flee as a Bird to our Mountain; your pillars, the principal of the flock are removed, those upon whom you leaned, and who were supporters to you, and upholders of you; and what will you now do? at such a time as this when they thus rejoyce, the righteous have this still to encourage themselves in: Though those you call foundations are removed, yet the Lord is in his holy Temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven, *Psalm. 11. 1, 4.* yea, now especially (as before is noted) he hath promised that he will be nigh to them; for the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise saith the Lord, (namely, when the godly man ceaseth, and when the tongue of the wicked speaks proud things, as if now they should prevail) I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him; and this he would do by his words, which are pure words, *Psalm. 12. 1, 6.* As to speak a little particularly,

1. The person to whom he commends them, as is declared in the word of his grace, is one that hath triumphed gloriously, who having had the judgment of this world executed upon him, hath endured and overcome it, and hath cast out

the Prince of the world, and so hath drawn all men unto him; he hath purged our sins from before the presence of God, abolished death, and destroyed him that had the power of death, even the devil, and overcome the world; his own right hand, and his holy arm hath gotten himself the victory, *Psal. 98. 1.* and hath obtained all power both in heaven and in earth, and all fulness of grace and truth into himself for us; *The Father hath not given the Spirit by measure unto him, but hath so loved him, that he hath given all things unto him, Job. 3. 34, 35.* The consideration hereof is powerful to strengthen us not to fear any of those things we may suffer, and to preserve us from evil, and from the fear of evil; this is our victory, even our faith: *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* even accepted to all the ends of his undertaking, and so raised from the dead, &c. *1 Job. 5. 4, 5.* In this we see, that

He hath trodden down strength, and delivered us in himself from the hand of our enemies, so that neither Satan, nor his instruments can set on us to harm us, till he give permissive commission thereto, because all judgment is committed to him of the Father; he hath bound the strong man, and the kingdom of God by him is brought unto us, and reigns over us graciously, *Mat. 12. 28, 29.* And this is made known to us in the Gospel, that we might rejoyce in his salvation, and in the name of our God we might set up the banner, as they profess to do, *Psal. 20. 5.* Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them (through the knowledge hereof) who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage, *Heb. 2. 14, 15.* See in our types how Moses encourages the hearts of the people: *If thou shalt say in thine heart, these Nations are more than I, &c. thou shalt not be afraid of them, but shalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt, &c. Dent. 7. 17, 18, 21.* As if he should say, consider how great things he hath done, how gloriously he hath triumphed, and in that thing wherein they thought to deal proudly he was above them, and this will be bread to you, for their strength is departed, *Numb. 14. 9. Psal. 74. 13, 14.* And now grace and truth is come by Jesus Christ, we have this delive-

deliverance and victory obtained by the Captain of our salvation set before us, to encourage us to serve God without fear, seeing in and by him we are delivered out of the hands of our enemies, *Luke 1. 71, 75.* and to be of good comfort, for he hath overcome the world, *Job. 16. 33.* He hath spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in himself, *Col. 2. 15.* *Eph. 4. 8.* *Psal. 68. 18.* He hath obtain'd in himself a compleat conquest over Satan (the true Leviathan and crooked Serpent) and his instruments, and is gone up with a shout (in token of victory) the Lord with the sound of a trumpet; *Sing praises to our God, sing praises to our King, sing praises,* *Psal. 47. 5, 6.* so as that they have no power except it be given them from above.

And he hath abolished death, and taken out the sting thereof, and so out of all afflictions and lesser deaths, so as there is nothing in them simply to separate us from the love of God in Christ; he hath delivered us in himself from that so great a death into which we were fallen, and in which we must have perished for ever, had he not remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy indures for ever; yea, *he hath turned our curses into blessings; he is ascended far above all heavens,* into heaven it self, *that he might fill all things,* and so all afflictions, and death, with the vertues and influences of his sacrifice; yea, he hath the keys of hell, and of death, *1 Cor. 1. 10.* *2 Tim. 1. 8, 10.* *Rom. 8. 39.* *Eph. 4. 10.*

2. Consider, he who hath thus obtained the victory, and whose it is, he is the Shepherd of his flock, the High Priest of their profession, who hold fast the beginning of the confidence, and the rejoycing of the hope firm to the end, *Heb. 3. 1, 2, 6, 14.* And so,

He is one who hath offered up an acceptable sacrifice unto the Father, even the offering of his own body once for all, both for his own sins which were imputed to him, and accepted by him, and for the sins of the people; and hath so taken away the guilt of the former, that the wrath of God from him remains not on any one for that sin and sinfulness simply; and obtained power to make reconciliation for the latter, and to forgive them, that through his name believe in him, *1st. 10. 43.* & *13. 39.* Oh, what encouragement is

there in this to strengthen us to run with patience the race set before us, and not to fear in the dayes of evil when the iniquity of our heels compals us about, *Psal. 49. 5, 15.* See how this even compleats the consolation of believers in a day of adversity, and causeth them to triumph always in Christ: *It is Christ that dyed; yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us* (that our iniquities may not be imputed, but graciously forgiven and healed) *who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us. Rom. 8. 34, 39.* Oh, consider what a merciful and faithful High-Priest we have in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; and who is therefore able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them; for such an High Priest became us; *Sec. Heb. 2. 17, & 3. 1. & 7. 25, 26.* If our sins were left upon us, and no deliverance therefrom obtained, how then could we live? This would make us faint in our sighings; But blest be the Lord, O my soul, saith the Prophet—*who forgiveth all thine iniquity*; whose office it is to do unto all that come unto God by him, and to make them partakers of the forgiveness of sins through the word of faith, *Psal. 103. 1, 3. All. 26. 18. & 10. 43.*

He is one who is made perfect through sufferings, and so he orders nothing but what he himself indured, for he was in all points tempted like unto us, yet without sin; yea, he bare our sufferings with the sting in them; *He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.* And how may this strengthen us, and make us willing to follow his steps, considering he indured so great afflictions for our sins, and hath taken the sting out of what remains for us to suffer. Hath our Lord so willingly humbled himself for us, and for the joy set before him (that he might bring us to God) indured the Cross, despising the shame, and shall not we count it an honour, and rejoyce that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for him? seeing also we have but the shadow of death to pass through. Consider him that indured such contradiction of sinners against himself, that ye be not weary, nor faint in your minds, *Heb. 12. 1, 3.*

Yea,

Yea, and since he hath suffered being tempted, he is able also (even fired and disposed) to succour them that are tempted: He hath also been compassed with Bulls, Lions, Wolves, &c. and knows how to have compassion on us, and to sympathize with us, to be even afflicted in our afflictions, and to pity us therein as a father pitieth his children, *Heb.* 2. 18. & 3. 1. & 4. 15.

Our High Priest is one on whom rests the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, who knows all things, and knows the hearts and thoughts of men, *Job.* 23. 17. *Act.* 1. 24. the darkness and the light are both alike to him; *Great is our Lord—his understanding is infinite*, *Psal.* 147. 5. And with this infinite wisdom is he filled, and furnished for the good of men, and especial good of those that believe, that he may improve it for their good in so befooling and disappointing their persecutors, that their hands may not perform their enterprizes; his eyes run to and fro to shew himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect with him, *2 Chron.* 16. 9. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do: *Seeing then we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens—let us hold fast our profession*, *Heb.* 4. 13, 14. Had we more to do with him, and did we consider that in him we are compleat, our souls would dwell at ease, and it would preserve us from those fears of amazement, and cares wherewith we afflict our selves to know mens intentions, and to save our selves, *Psal.* 10. 11, 14. & 35. 22. *Jer.* 11. 18, 19.

And together herewith, He, our Lord, is of great power, *Psal.* 147. 5. and hath received this, and will manage it for the special good of those that believe; *The Father hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things unto his Church.* And the Apostle prays for the believers, that the eyes of their understandings might be enlightened to know this, which would delight their souls in the multitude of their thoughts within them, *Eph.* 1. 17, 20, 22. And this compleats the answer of the good conscience, that he is gone up into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, Angels, Authorities and powers being made subject unto him, *1 Pet.* 3. 21, 22. *Heb.* 4. 14. & 8. 1. & 12. 2. All are his servants; Satan and

and all his instruments are ordered by him, and when he suffers them to take away from us, or afflict us, yet it is the Lord that taketh away and orders that affliction to us; though he is not the author of the sin, yet who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commands it not? *Out of the mouth of the most high proceeds not evil and good?* Job 1. 21. Lam. 3. 37, 38. Consider then, when any grievous wolves enter in among us, that it is the Lord that dyed for us, yea rather that is risen again, that hath ordered those cruel ones to us; and his will is good, perfect and acceptable; and therefore let him do what seemeth him good.

He is such an High Priest who hath confirmed great, and precious promises in his blood, even for this life also, as

He will debate in measure, both as to the weight and continuance of the affliction: *The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands to iniquity,* Isa. 27. 8. *Psal. 125. 3.* There hath no temptation taken you (saith the Apostle) but that which is common to man (or moderate) and God is faithful (for the time to come) who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear, *1 Cor. 10. 13. 14.* To this purpose also speaks *Moses*, Deut. 8. 5. 6. *Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee* (namely, with compassion and much tenderness.) He is a God of judgment, by whom actions and afflictions are weighed. *The sitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the sitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod;* (he will not lay upon his people more than they are able, or he will inable them to bear, but bear them with a rod and a staff, and not bring the wheel over them, *Prov. 20. 26.* and his rod and his staff shall comfort them; namely, his moderate afflictions, as *Psal. 23. 4.*) bread corn is bruised, because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working; who knows our frame and weakness, and is excellent in working for our escape, that the Spirit may not fail before him, and the Soul which he hath made,

Isa. 57. 16. A bruised reed he will not break, Isa. 28. 26, 29. &c. 42. 1, 3. Psal. 103. 13, 14. Surely, saith the Prophet, the wrath of man shall praise thee; and the remainder thereof (which would not tend to his praise in the profit of his people) thou wilt restrain, Psal. 76. 10.

He will be with them in all the grievances he is ordering to them, according to that, *Isa. 41. 10, 14. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. And, Isa. 43. 2, 5. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; fear not for I am with thee. So Hag. 2. 4, 5. Hence the Psalmist saith, Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; namely, I will fear no evil of, or concerning thee, I will not be jealous of my Shepherd; and so, I will fear no evil, no adversity whatsoever, for thou art with me, to uphold and strengthen me with strength in my soul, Psal. 23. 4. &c. 138. 3. This comforted the Prophet when in great affliction, and in derision daily; I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side: report, say they, and we will report; all my familiars watched for my halting, peradventure he will be inticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. (By the way, they signify, that unless they could intice him, or turn him aside, they could not take their revenge on him) but, saith he, the Lord is with me, therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail, Jer. 20. 10, 11. And so*

He will preserve their souls from the design of Satan and his instruments, that nothing shall be able to separate them from the love of God in Christ, that love him and keep his word, *Rom. 8. 35, 39. he will not deliver them unto the will of their enemies, Psal. 41. 2. He is faithful who will establish them, and keep them from evil, 2 Thes. 3. 3. He will not suffer the feet of those that trust in him to be moved, he that keepeth them will not slumber; behold he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep, the Lord is their keeper; the Sun shall not smite them by day, the Lord shall preserve them from all evil, he shall preserve their souls, &c. Psal. 121.*

86. 97. 10. *1 Sam. 2. 9.* *My sheep, saith our Saviour, hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand, &c.* *Joh. 10. 27, 30.* Oh! what encouragement is given us herein to trust in him, and not be afraid; not to fear any of those things we may suffer, but though bryars and thorns be with us, and we dwell among Scorpions, and our souls are among Lions and Wolves, even amongst them that are set on fire, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword, yet to walk in the strength of the Lord God, and to make mention of his righteousness, even of his only. Yea,

He will cause all things to work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to purpose, so as that in all the tribulations he is ordering, they shall be more: than conquerours through him that hath loved them, and given himself for them, *Rom. 8. 28, 37.* and they shall be gainers by their losses, and have occasion with thankfulness to acknowledge, that it was good for them, that they were afflicted. *Psal. 119. 62, 71.* for his end in ordering the afflictions of the Gospel is for their profit, that they might be partakers of his holiness, *Heb. 12. 10, 11.* he is refining them but not with silver; he is chusing them in the furnace of affliction, *Isa. 48. 10. Zech. 13. 9.* *Every branch in the true vine the Husbandman purgeth (continually) that it may bring forth more fruit,* *Joh. 15. 2.* and by all tribulations he is preparing them for glory, and more glory for them: *Our light afflictions which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen,* saith the Apostle; for which cause they fainted not, *2 Cor. 4. 16. 18.* yea, death is theirs, and to die gain; and the Lord knoweth how, even by this means, to deliver the godly out of temptation, *1 Cor. 3. 22. Phil. 1. 27. 2 Pet. 2. 9.* and their manifold temptations, the tryal of their faith, through which now for a season, when need is, they are in heaviness, shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Christ, *1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.*

And now in the multitude of their troubles, and thoughts within them, his comforts shall delight their souls, *Psal. 94. 19.*

He

He is the God of all comfort, who comforteth them in all their tribulations; and as the sufferings of Christ abound in them, so their consolation also aboundeth by Christ; He is one who comforts them that are cast down, and restoreth comfort to the contrite one, and his mourners; by creating the fruit of his lips in his Gospel, peace, peace unto them, 2 Cor. 1. 3, 5, 7, & 7. 5. *Isa.* 57. 18, 19. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Christ, because the Lord hath anointed him to preach good tidings to the meek—To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, &c. *Isa.* 61. 1, 3. He will then especially and abundantly cause them to prove the sufficiency of his grace, 2 Cor. 12. 7, 10. that having access by faith into that grove wherein they stand, even that grace, that while we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly, they may rejoice in tribulations also, *Rom.* 5. 2, 3, 6. *John.* 1. 9, 15.

He will give unto them his good Spirit to bring to remembrance the sayings of Christ, to glorifie him, and exalt him, and to teach them all things; and so to be a spirit of grace and supplication unto them, to teach them how to pour out their hearts unto him, in what manner, and for what things; and in what encouragement, *Joh.* 14. 27. & 16. 13, 14. Likewise the Spirit also beareth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; *Rom.* 8. 26, 27. and so to teach them how to answer adversaries and opposers. This is the promise which our Saviour promised his Disciples; when he sent them forth as Lambs in the midst of Wolves, to preserve them from carefulest and thoughtfulness what to answer: But when, saith he, they deliver you up, take no thought how, or what ye shall speak (either as to the manner or matter) for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your father which speaketh in you, *Mat.* 10. 16, 20. And hence our Saviour admonisheth them to settle it in their hearts not to meditate before what they shall answer, for he will assist them (in so doing) he will give them a mouth, and wisdom, which all their adversaries shall not be able to gainsay, nor resist, *Luke.* 21. 14, 15.

Yet, what shall I say, for the time would fail: he will be abundantly nigh unto them in this time of trouble: *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears open to their cry*, 1 Pet. 3. 12. he will fulfil their desires, *Psal. 145. 18, 19. Purge away their transgressions*, *Psal. 65. 3. Subdue their iniquities*, *Mic. 7. 19. Fight their haters*, 2 Chron. 32. 8. *Renew their inward man*, 2 Cor. 4. 16. *Revive them in the midst of trouble*, *Psal. 138. 7. Supply all their wants according to his riches in glory*, *Phil. 4. 19. Perform all things for them*, *Psal. 57. 2. And perfect whatever concerns them*, *Psal. 138. 8. And so sanctifie them throughout, that their whole spirit, soul, and body, shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus*, 1 Thes. 5. 23. In short, he will never leave them, nor forsake them, so that they may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me*, Heb. 13. 5, 6.

And he is faithful that hath promised. Oh! let us then hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, *Heb. 10. 23.* and not be afraid of men, or their fear; nor say a confederacy with them that say a confederacy; but sanctifie the Lord of hosts in our hearts, and make him our fear and our dread, and he shall be a sanctuary unto us, *Isa. 8. 13, 14.* Consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, who was faithful to him that appointed him in that hard and difficult work; he hath been wonderfully tryed, and did not fail therein, nor was discouraged; but for the joy set before him endured the Cross, despising the shame: He set his face like a flint, and patiently endured the judgment of the world, and waited for the Lord till he brought him out of the horrible pit & miry clay, and set his feet upon a rock: He was for this purpose manifested, to take away our sins, and in him is no sin; and therein may we so behold his faithfulness, as to be strengthened to rest in him, and wait patiently for the performance of what yet remains, for faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it.

And he is the Mediator of the New Testament which he hath confirmed by his blood. He it is who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, to make intercession for them that come to God by him, that their iniquities might not withhold good things from them, & make them know God's breath of promise, *Rev. 1. 18. Heb. 7. 25. Numb. 14. 34.*

He

He mediates the New Covenant, and appears in the presence of God in the virtues of his sacrifice once offered as the propitiation for their sins, to take them away, and cover them; and in their confessing them he is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and his blood cleanseth them from all unrighteousness, *1 Joh. 1. 7, 9. & 2. 2.* and he lives to perform and execute this Testament of his own, and to dispense to them all things that pertain to life and godliness, that the called may obtain the promise of the eternal inheritance, *Heb. 7. 25, 28. & 8. 6. & 9. 15.*

3. Yea, and he hath set a blessed hope before them, that those that suffer here with him shall reign with him, and be glorified together. *And he that hath this hope in Christ purifieth himself* (from desires of present manifestation) *as he is pure, 2 Tim. 2. 12. Rom. 8. 17, 18. 1 Joh. 3. 2, 3.* which hope is now powerful, as declared in the word of the truth of the Gospel, to save them from their sins and idols, and from being afraid with any fear of amazement, *Rom. 8. 24, 25.* and it is so confirmed, that they might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them; which they have as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast; and which entereth into that within the vail, whether the fore-runner is for us entered, Jesus, made an High-Priest after the order of *Melchisedeck*, *Heb. 6. 18, 20.* He will then give compleat rest to them who are now troubled, avenge them of their adversaries, and save them with an everlasting salvation. And this is now reported to us in the Gospel, that looking to the end from the beginning, we might be strengthened with strength in our soul; according to that, *Isa. 35. 3, 10. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not, behold your God will come with vengeance, God with a recompence, he will come and save you;* and then no Lyon shall be there to afflict them, nor any ravenous beast, and so no grievous Wolf, &c. *Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away:* There will be an end of all these troubles and afflictions to those that live godly in Christ Jesus; and their expectation shall not be cut off; yea, now it is but a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry, and will re-

deem them out of all adversity, and they shall then obtain that salvation in Christ Jesus with eternal glory; and therefore they have cause; and are instructed to rejoyce, in as much as they are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, they also may be glad with exceeding joy, *1 Pet. 4. 13. Jam. 1. 12. Rev. 2. 7, 10, 11, 13, 17.* Surely there is that contained in God and the word of his grace, which may strengthen us to all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; so as we need not fear any of those things we may suffer, but rather rejoyce that we are counted worthy to suffer for his sake, who so willingly endured so great sufferings for us.

2. To God and the Word of his grace he commits them for their preservation from grievous wolves, as taken in the second sense before mentioned, *viz.* for false Prophets and seducers; to the end that committing themselves thereto, they might not be led away with the error of the wicked, and so fall from their own steadfastness, but be preserved from hearing and receiving those instructions which cause to err from the words of knowledge; and great need we have to commit our selves to him and his word on this account, that we may go from the presence of such foolish ones, in whom we perceive not the lips of knowledge; for these, or many of them are very powerful to deceive. For,

1. The Ministers which Satan employs as his instruments in sowing tares, they are such, many times, as are very specious in their outward apperance; *they come unto you in sheeps clothing;* saith our Saviour, *Mat. 7. 15.* namely, appear in their outward conversation, as if they were of the sheep of Christ; pretend to a great deal of meekness, self-denial, mortification, righteousness in their dealings amongst men, holiness, and have a shew of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, nor in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh, *Col. 2. 18, 23.* they appear very righteous unto men, while yet within they are ravening wolves, and full of hypocrisie and iniquity, as *Mat. 23. 25, 28.* and have a form of godliness upon them, and so are deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ: And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of light; therefore it is no great thing if his Ministers

ministers be transformed as the Ministers of righteousness, &c. *1 Tim. 3. 5. 2 Cor. 11. 19, 20.* there is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and say to others, stand further off, for I am holier than thou; though yet they are not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, Oh how lofty are their eyes, and their eye-lids lifted up, *Isa. 65. 5. Prov. 30. 12, 13.* they are like unto the Pharisees of old; who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, and even accounted themselves more pure than the Lord Jesus, condemning him, and faulting his Disciples, *Luk. 18. 9, 11. & 17. 12. Joh. 9. 16.* and therefore they are the more dangerous; were they such as were walking in the gross lusts of the flesh, they would be more readily abstained from; but being like graves that appear not, yea appearing as the Disciples of Christ in their outward conversation: And also boasting of themselves, and their own mouths praising themselves as if they were the only Saints, and mean time despising and condemning others; they are the more powerful to deceive, considering that we are naturally prone and apt to suffer gladly such fools as exalt themselves, and proclaim their own goodness, *2 Cor. 11. 19, 20.* We have therefore great need to watch unto God, and the word of his grace.

2. The message also which they bring, is such as the flesh favours and finds sweetness in; it is such as is suitable to our natural spirit, lust and desire: namely, such as leads men to have their rest and rejoycing in something that was not crucified for them, as in some work or privilege of the flesh, some manner of observing such or such an Ordinance, some tradition of the Elders, some light, spirit, or operation in men; some marks, frames, qualifications, changes or alterations in them, some sign that is not the sign of the Prophet *Jonas*. In short, as is before said, the voice of their divers and strange doctrines, is, stollen waters are sweet, and bread of secretaries is pleasant, *Prov. 9. 17.* to wit, the matter of feeding they direct unto, and commend and approve, it is somewhat else than the flesh of Christ which was given for the life of the world, *Joh. 6. 51.* that which wisdom calls to and commends, it is that feast of fat things prepared in Christ for all Nations; and those consolations of Christ wherewith the
God

God of all comfort doth comfort the believers in all their tribulations, are such as are proper to comfort others that are in any trouble, *Prov. 9. 1, 6. Isa. 25. 6. Mat. 23. 4. 2 Cor. 1. 3, 5.* But now these consolations of God are small with them, because there is some secret thing with them, *Job 15. 11.* and they direct men to have the beginning of their confidence and consolation, not in Christ as declared in the Testimony, but in themselves, which is very savoury to the flesh. Hence the Apostle, when he had been exhorting the believers as the sum and end of all he had been speaking to them, to rejoyce in the Lord, even in Christ Jesus as preached in the Gospel, he adds, *beware of dogs, beware of evil workers*, *Phil. 3. 1, 3.* As who should say, these evil workers will direct you to rejoyce in something besides the Lord; and indeed as the serpent beguiled *Eve* through his subtilty, so they come to corrupt from the simplicity that is in Christ, *2 Cor. 11. 3. viz.* by promising others, that in listening to them, they shall be as Gods, and have a self-sufficiency in themselves, and shall have their life in their own hands. Oh how pleasing is this to us ever since we drank in the poyson of Satans temptations! How doth this fill us with evil thoughts and jealousies of God, and of that rest and refreshing he hath prepared for us in Christ, and leads us to seek to have our portion in our own hands? How doth this lead us to say, Our soul loatheth this Manna, this light bread, and to seek after some other beginning of confidence, some other witness and sign of God's love, some other matter of feeding than the flesh of Christ; or to feed on it after some other manner, than as given for the life of the world; and to have the ground and bottom matter of our rejoycing, and confidence in our selves, or in something in which we are preferred before others, or differenced from others, and to this these ravening wolves lead; yea, and they pretend a great deal of love and kindness to others, and use flattering words, promising them liberty in listening to them, and that they shall have their fill of love, boasting of their freedom from sin, their attainments, experiments, &c. many times while they (though privily) are the servants of corruption, *Prov. 7. 13, 21. Gal. 4. 17. Col. 2. 4. 2 Pet. 2. 18, 19.* and therefore we need to beware of them in the light, and strength of God's grace.

3. They are such, also as are very forward, impudent, and diligent in promoting their evil design; they will enter in amongst you, saith the Apostle, *ver.* 29. they come unto you, saith our Saviour, *Mat.* 7. 15. So *2 Joh.* 10. their feet abide not in their houses, but now they are without, now in the streets, and lye in wait at every corner, to call passengers who go right on their wayes, *Prov.* 7. 8, 12. & 9. 13, 16. They sleep not except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall; they compass Sea and Land to make a profelyte, as our Saviour saith of the Scribes and Pharisees, *Mat.* 23. 15. they watch for all opportunities, that with good words and fair speeches they may deceive the hearts of the simple, *Rom.* 16. 18. who believe every word, *Prov.* 14. 15. and trouble, and unsettle believers; and if they can but find Christ's servants asleep, the enemy then will have a fit season to sow his tares, *Mat.* 13. 25. this is the day they look for; and through their importunity and watchfulness to beguile others, they do much mischief: Needful therefore also, it is to betake our selves to God, and the word of his grace, and watch thereto and therein, that we may not be turned aside by them.

4. Yea, they are very reserved and subtil of heart, *Prov.* 7. 10. and use a great deal of cunning craftiness to deceive and beguile others withal: her wayes are moveable, thou canst not know them, *Prov.* 5. 6. they would be thought, many times, to commend that which their soul loaths; they can sometimes speak of Christ in their words, and of Gods grace in him to sinners; while yet they only consult to cast him down from his excellency, they delight in lyes, they bless with their mouth, while they curse inwardly, *Selah,* *Psal.* 62. 4. they privily deny the Lord that bought them, and not openly and in plain words, however not at first, or until men begin to listen to them; and embrace their strange doctrines, *2 Pet.* 2. 1. inwardly they are ravening wolves, while yet they come unto you in sheeps cloathing, *Mat.* 7. 15. they hide their design so cunningly, that they are not easily discovered therein, and speak in secret, and are like them that peep and mutter, as those that are afraid of the light; and if one know, discern and take notice of them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death; and therefore believers are

are more ready to be insnared with them, and it is more difficult so to detect them, as to preserve others from them. So much the Apostle signifies, when he saith; *Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping* (as signifying that the believers were hardly persuaded to believe they were evil workers, or as bad as indeed they were, because they pretended one thing, and intended another, and yet notwithstanding their specious pretences) *they were the enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, a making of the visage of the Son of man*, Phil. 3. 18, 19. and therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, that we may not be as children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lye in wait to deceive; *Eph. 4. 14.*

For notwithstanding their appearing godliness and great boastings of themselves, their alluring doctrines; their diligent importunity, and cunning craftiness in hiding their design; we may by the words of God's lips keep us from the error of the wicked, and from every path of the destroyer. *When wisdom (Jesus Christ) entereth into thine heart, by faith; and knowledge (the word of his grace) is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee, to deliver thee from the way of the evil man*, Prov. 2. 10, 12. & 4. 10, 16. Or let us hear then the instruction of our Father, which is, let thine heart retain my words, keep my commandments and live; get wisdom, get understanding, so get it not, neither decline from the words of my mouth; forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee; love her and she shall keep thee, *Prov. 4. 1, 4, 8.* In committing our selves then to God and his Gospel, we may be preserved from those whose end is destruction. For, 1. Here is completeness prepared and discovered to give satisfying to our souls. And, 2. Direction given, whereby we may know, so as to beware of those grievous Wolves.

Here is completeness prepared and discovered to give satisfying to our souls, this, to which he commits them, is the rest where the weary may find rest, and this is the refreshing, *Isa. 28. 25.* Jesus Christ as declared in the Gospel is the bread of life; and he that cometh to him shall never hunger other

other food) and he that believeth on him shall never thirst, *Joh. 6. 35.* this God, even our God, hath done all things well for us, and obtained all things into himself, that may answer to all our needs, supply all our wants, and perfect whatsoever doth concern us; he having been delivered for our offences, and raised again from the dead, hath made peace by the blood of his Cross, slain the enemy that was between God and mankind, broken down the middle wall of partition, abolished death, destroyed him that had the power of death, wrought righteousness, compleated salvation, obtained eternal redemption, received all fulness into himself for us; yea, he hath all things given unto him that may satisfie us. All things are delivered to him of the father, *Luk. 10. 22.* All things are here ready, *Mat. 22. 4.* *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand,* *Joh. 3. 35.* All things that the Father hath are his, *Joh. 16. 15.* And surely he saith so often, *All things,* that we might be assured that all fulness dwelleth in him; and we may well reason as the Apostle doth, in that he put all things in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him, *Heb. 1. 8.* So may we say, in that all things are delivered to him, and ready and prepared in him, it is manifest that nothing is excepted; yea, and he gives all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of himself, even through the word of knowledge, the word of his grace, *1 Pet. 1. 2, 3.* How powerful is this to preserve us from those who come unto us preaching another Jesus, whom the Apostles have not preached, or another Gospel, which the believers have not accepted? whosoever drinketh of the water which Christ in the Testimony gives, shall never thirst. This will preserve such as continue drinking from gadding about to change their way, and from an itching ear to hear, and heap up to themselves teachers that bring not this doctrine; and even make them say with Peter, when many of Christ's Disciples, because of reproofs met with, and not submitted to, went back, and walked no more with him: *Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life,* *Joh. 6. 68, 69.* *Prov. 8. 34, 35.* *In him (namely, in Christ as declared in the Testimony) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: And this I say, saith the Apostle, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words; in him dwells all the ful-*

ness of the Godhead badly, and in him ye are complete, who is the head of all principality and power, let no man therefore beguile you, &c. Col. 2. 3, 9, 18. These things, saith the Apostle John, have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know ye have eternal life, in having the Son, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. This was powerful to preserve them from those that did seduce them, 1 Joh. 5. 10, 13, with Chap. 2. 25, 26. Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord, 1 Cor. 1. 30, 31. He is the living bread that came down from heaven Joh. 6. 51. The fountain of living waters for washing and cleansing us, for cooling our thirst, and satisfying us, for watering and making us fruitful, even like a watered garden; he is the great Apostle and High Priest of the believers profession, and able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him; and they that forsake him shall be ashamed of all other confidences, consolations, bread of secreties, and stollen waters, while in him all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory.

We have also direction given us to know, so as to beware of those grievous wolves: Our Saviour gives a general one to his Disciples: By their fruits ye shall know them, Mat. 7. 25, 26, where, by their fruits, is not meant their outward cloathing, or outward apperance: Such may seem unto men to have a good life and conversation, and be herein blameless among men, Phil. 3. 6. appear outwardly righteous unto men, Mat. 23. 28. desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, Gal. 6. 16. have a form of godliness upon them, 2 Tim. 3. 5. abstain from many gross evils, Luk. 18. 11. be transformed as the Ministers of righteousness, 2 Cor. 11. 15. boast of their sufferings, and preaching freely, 2 Cor. 11. 7, 13, 23. zealously affect the believers, Gal. 4. 17. commend themselves, and justify themselves before men, 2 Cor. 10. 7, 12, 18. Luk. 16. 15. promise others liberty, and fulness of contentment and satisfaction in listening to them, Prov. 7. 14, 18. 2 Per. 2. 18, 19. and yet be inwardly ravening wolves; and therefore the way to know them is not by their outward apperance, for that may be so specious in evil workers, that the believers

lievers themselves, while judging and walking as men, may have such a good opinion of them as to fall too much in love with them, and to count them their enemies who give a true discovery of them; *Gal. 4. 16.* and occasion grief to those that are over them in the Lord, and admonish them, because they are so hardly perswaded to beware of them, *Phil. 3. 18.* judge not according to appearance, saith our Saviour, but judge righteous judgment, *Joh. 7. 24.* as signifying, the judging according to appearance is not righteous judgment: for, such as are the enemies of the Cross of Christ may have a beautiful outside; do ye look on things after the outward appearance, saith the Apostle, when he is warning of deceitful workers, *2 Cor. 10. 7.* This is the way to be mistaken and deceived.

But, by their fruits is meant,

1. The fruits of their lips, even those divers and strange doctrines which they bring, in which they cause to err from the words of knowledge: And this appears to be the meaning of it, and not their outward appearance; because such have sheeps cloathing, as is said before; as well as also it is a direction for knowing, not evil persons in general, but false Prophets in particular. Now, how should they be known so well as by their strange voice? and a strange voice it is indeed to hear persons that appear to be, and are by many taken for sheep, and have sheeps cloathing upon them, to bark like wolves against the Shepherd, and the Testimony of Christ; to appear like a Lamb, and speak as a Dragon, as is said of the man of sin, *Rev. 13. 11.* and this understanding of it suits well with what our Saviour gives as the reason why the sheep will not follow a stranger, which also he calls a wolf, namely, because of their voice, and not their outside appearance: *A stranger,* saith he, *they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers;* *Joh. 10. 4. 5. 12.* by their words then they may be discovered and condemned. And that this is meant, y fruits, will further appear by those rules of direction given to know false Prophets by, by the Apostles: I shall particularly pitch upon those two given by the Apostle *Joh. 1. 4. 16.* where he warns the believers not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false Prophets are gone

our into the world. And that we may try them, he gives two rules for tryal, by which we may know them.

1. *Every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in the flesh, is not of God, and this is that spirit of Antichrist,* ver. 3. So again, 2 *Joh. 7. Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not Jesus Christ come in the flesh, this is a deceiver and an Antichrist.*

The person they confess not, is, Jesus Christ which is come in the flesh, and hath finished the work which the Father gave him to do in his own body, even Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in the dayes of *Cesar Augustus*, when *Cyrenius* was Governour of Syria, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again, in the same body in which he was crucified; the third day according to the Scriptures, as distinguished from all other persons and things.

And by [*confessing*] is meant, an open and plain acknowledgement that he hath come, with a praising, commending and speaking honourably of him, according to the Scriptures, giving thanks unto him, or giving him the praise which is due unto him, and so thankfully acknowledging in their doctrines, that he hath done such things, &c. it become, and is such an one as the Father hath testified of him. So where it is said, *Psal. 18. 49. I will give thanks unto thee, or praise thee;* it is thus rendred, *Rom. 15. 9. I will confess to thee among the Gentiles.* So where we read in *Psal. 107. 8, 15, 21, 31. Oh that men would praise the Lord.* In every of these verses in the former translation, it is rendred, *confess.* So *Mat. 11. 25. At that time Jesus said, I thank, or praise thee,* it is in the Margin, *I confess,* &c. See also, *Heb. 13. 15.* So here, *Every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ which is come in the flesh,* that is, that praiseth not, magnifieth not, lieth not up, celebrateth not him, is not of God. We may instance a little particularly.

1. Those persons confess not, praise not Jesus Christ come in the flesh, who tell us, That the bread and wine in the Supper when consecrated, is transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ: They hereby praise not that Jesus of Nazareth that was born of the Virgin Mary, and dyed for our sins at *Jerusalem*, and is raised again; but somewhat else in the room and stead of him, that was not then, nor many hundred years since, in being; which was never crucified for us,

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never buried, never raised again as he was; yea, blasphemously they lift up and magnifie themselves, who think they can make their Saviour, and so are greater than he; besides they cast him down from his excellency, for he is but one, 2 Cor. 3. 14. 1 Cor. 8. 6. but of these it may be said, according to the number of their Cities are their Christs, as Jer. 2. 28.

2. Shall they confess not Jesus Christ, who say, the body of our Lord Jesus lyes whithery laid it, and is turned to dust, and rottenness, and that he is not raised from the dead in that same body in which he bare our sins on the Tree; but call some light, spirit, or seed in every man, the Christ, in some dying, in others rising, &c. They deny Jesus to be the Christ, and so are Antichrists, 1 Joh. 2. 22. and even call him accused, one who hath failed in the work appointed him to do, and hath not redeemed us from the curse of the Law; for if Christ be not raised from the dead in that same body in which he died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and was buried; then is our preaching vain, saith the Apostle, and your faith is also vain, ye are yet in your sins, 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4, 12, 20. They speak indeed many times of a Christ, but they deny or confess not him who is so indeed; for he is one who shewed himself alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs, and rose in that same body in which he was crucified (though not in the weakness it was sometime in) in that body which hath flesh and bones, 1 Pet. 3. 24. Joh. 20. 21. Mat. 1. 3. Luke 24. 39. and evidenced that it was he himself that was alive after his resurrection, by shewing to his Disciples his hands and his feet, Luke 24. 39, 40. and his hands and his side; namely, his hands that were nailed to the Tree, and his side that was pierced with a spear; and saith to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, &c. *And these things are written that we might believe that Jesus* (the son of the Virgin Mary, that had that name given unto him on the eighth day, when he was circumcised and was known by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, by friends and enemies) *is the Christ, the anointed one of God,* Joh. 20. 20, 25, 27, 31. With Chap. 19. 34. and in that very body he ascended and offered it up to God, according

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ing to the will of God, by the which will of God we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, even of that body which the Father prepared for him when he came into the world, *Heb. 10. 5, 10.* and hath in heaven a glorious body, distinct from his body the Church, which while here is vile, *Phil. 3. 20, 21.* and is there, and from thence nam'd himself unto *Paul*, Jesus of *Nazareth*, *Act. 22. 8.* and in that body of his flesh, as distinct from his body the Church, he doth, and will present holy, unblameable and unreprou- ble in his sight, his body the Church, even such as continue in the faith grounded and settled, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, *Col. 1. 22, 24.* and so he in that same body, even the man Christ Jesus, is the Mediator between God and men, *1 Tim. 2. 5.* and by this man God shall judge the world in righteousness, whereof he hath gi- ven assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead, *Act. 17. 31. Mar. 16. 27. & 19. 28 & 25. 31.*

3. And so they are not of God, who deny Jesus Christ to be, or confels him not to be, the only foundation of our faith and hope, but call some purpose or decree of election, respecting mens persons in a personal consideration, the foundation: There is no purpose of God which is the founda- tion; and much less that which many plead for, which is no purpose of his, and which renders the Cross of Christ, and the preaching of it, a foolish and undesirable thing. As well as also they confels not Christ in their doctrines, who direct men to look into themselves originally for some sign and witness of God's love before they can assure them Christ hath died for them, and God loves them; and if upon examina- tion they find (as they conceit) some love to God, before they know whether he hath loved them, then they sell them they are in a good condition, Christ hath died for them, and God loves them, and righteousness is prepared for them; and so they have according to such desires the beginning of their confidence, & bottom matter of it in their own selves, in some frame, change, alterations love to God, before they know God hath loved them, which is not love; herein not confessing Jesus Christ, which is come in the flesh to be the foundation, which the only is, *1 Cor. 3. 11. 1 Job. 4. 9. 10.*

And so such praise not Jesus Christ, who confels him not

to be the only High-Priest and Head of the Church, but give that honour to another besides him, or together with him; and confess not the infinite excellency and abiding virtue of his one sacrifice of his own body offered by himself once for all; but offer up a propitiatory sacrifice besides for the quick and the dead; hereby counting the blood of the Covenant a common thing, and like the blood of Bulls and Goats; and his sacrifice like those offered by the Law, which because they could not purge away sin, were therefore continually offered, *Heb. 9. 13, 14, 25. & 7. 27. & 10. 1, 14.* or that confels him not to be the only doot of approach to God, *Joh. 10. 4, 5, 7, 9, 12.* or the only bread of life, *Joh. 6. 35, 51.* or the only Mediator, but multiply Mediators to themselves, as Saints departed, &c. *1 Tim. 2. 5. 10.* which we shall add no more now, but that which the Apostle saith, *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha, 1 Cor. 16. 22.*

2. But because many say, Lord, Lord, and do make some right acknowledgment of Christ, viz. that he was delivered to death, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God, &c. which is true; and yet give not to him the praise due to his name, nor list him up, and praise him as he worthily deserves; therefore we have another rule of trial given us, in *1 Joh. 4. 6. We are of God* (namely, the Apostles in their word and doctrine) *he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us* (that is, he is not determined by our word in all his confessions, he alwayes heareth not, adhereth not to the words which the Apostles have spoken, viz. those which the Holy Ghost teacheth, but rather speaks in the words which mans wisdom teacheth) hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. By this word of God's grace we may mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which the believers have learned of Christ by his Apostles, so as to avoid them, *Rom. 16. 17.* to this rule we are often directed; *To the Law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them, Isa. 8. 20.* If we, saith the Apostle, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than what we have preached, let him be accursed, *Gal. 1. 8, 9.* If any man consent not in his teachings, to wholsom words,

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the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, &c. from such turn away, 1 Tim. 6. 3, 7. Now then we may be assured, that such consent to wholsome words, who say, Christ died not for all; nor by the grace of God tasted death for every man; contrary to 2 Cor. 5. 14. Heb. 2. 9. and so such as deny him to be the standing propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1 Joh. 2. 2. These teach men to deny the Lord that bought them; yea, they are led by the spirit of error, who confess not, praise not, lift not up Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world; they come not up to wholsome words, for the true Christ is the Saviour of the world, even of mankind, and this began to be spoken by the Lord himself, Joh. 3. 16, 17. & 4. 42. & 6. 51. and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, 1 Cor. 5. 14, 15, 19. and to the Son of God is the Saviour of the world; and this was the sum of the Apostles testimony, which they had received, and saw in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, 1 Joh. 4. 13, 15. And the Apostle Paul saith, that he was ordained a Preacher of this, viz. That God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, &c. 1 Tim. 2. 4, 7. and instructed Timothy to hold fast the form of sound words, which he heard of him, that unto which he was ordained a Preacher (as before) and an Apostle, viz. that God is one, and there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time; by which he proves and evidences that God will have all men to be saved; &c. I say, to hold this fast, in faith, in an hearty belief of the truth of it, and in love to men, so as declaring this to them, and holding it fast in profession, according to the constraining operations of the grace of God in Christ, 2 Tim. 1. 9, 13. with 1 Tim. 2. 4, 7. & 2 Cor. 5. 13, 15, 18, 20. and exhorted Timothy to command others to teach, and himself to teach, that the living God is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe, 1 Tim. 4. 10, 11. See also Tit. 2. 11, 13.

And in this direction given unto us for trial of spirits, that we may know to use avoid false Prophets, it is observable, the Apostle doth not positively and particularly declare what the

the false spirits do hold and teach; but in the general he saith, If they confess not, praise not, list not up Jesus Christ, or give not to him the glory due to him in their confessions, so as in all hearing the Apostles, they are not of God, and we are to beware of them; if they Evangelize otherwise than what the Apostles have Evangelized, we are to reject them; for if it be not the voice of our Shepherd, we may be sure it is the voice of a stranger, and so we are to flee from them; yea, if any man come unto you, saith the Apostle, and bring not this doctrine (the doctrine of Christ in which he is lifted up in the words of the Holy Ghost) receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; He saith not, if he take not up this doctrine, which he may seem to do for advantage sake when he is with you, that he may not be discovered, but may deceive you; but if he bring it not, if this be not his message, his errand when he comes, the thing he is set to promote, receive him not, &c. *Prov. 14. 7. Job. 10. 4, 5. 2 Job. 7, 11.*

2. And by their fruits may be meant also the effects* of their doctrines, which the Disciples of Christ may perceive and discern, namely, that they are such as tend to corrupt from that simplicity that is in Christ, to draw away mens hearts and affections from him who is the only foundation of faith and hope, the only fountain in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, the only bread of life, and door of approach to God. They tend to remove men from him that called them into the grace of Christ, and cause men to err from the words of knowledge, *Prov. 19. 27. Gal. 1. 6.* and this appears plainly in those that imbrace and entertain those confessions in which Jesus Christ is not lifted up in the word of the Apostles.

Now then in applying our selves to God, and the word of his grace, we may be preserved from those grievous Wolves; for they confess not our God, or confess him not according to that discovery given of him in the word of his grace: Oh let us then keep sound wisdom and discretion, so shall they be life to our souls, preserve our souls in life, and grace to our necks; then shall we walk in the way safely, and our foot shall not stumble, *Prov. 3. 21, 26.* take fast hold of instruction, let her not go, keep her for she is thy life, *Prov. 4. 13.*

3. That I may not over-much enlarge, I shall briefly say, the Apostle directs and commends them to this person and thing, that they might not arise speaking perverse things; and that they might be preserved from those amongst themselves that would arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them, *ver. 30.* What hath been spoken before may be useful here also, only in that he now forewarns them of this danger among themselves, and therefore thus commits them. He signifies,

1. That amongst those whom the Holy Ghost hath made overseers over the flock, some may possibly arise speaking perverse things, crooked-wreathed things, such as in which they would pervert the Gospel of Christ, *Gal. 1. 7.* and that either by desiring to be teachers of the Law, as there were some inclined hereto amongst these believers, *1 Tim. 1. 3, 7.* So some such among the *Galatians* that turned them aside to the Law, to be justified or sanctified by the works thereof, and to perfect by the flesh what was begun by the Spirit, *Gal. 2. 13, 16. & 3. 1, 5. & 5. 1, 4.* and turning them again to weak and beggarly elements, *Gal. 4. 9. Col. 2. 23, 24.* or by not consenting unto wholsom words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, but limiting the grace of God, and teaching men to deny the Lord that bought them, *2 Pet. 2. 1, 2.* or not consenting to the doctrine according to godliness, but turning the grace of our God into wantonness, as if it gave liberty to men to continue in sin; or to use their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness or licentiousness, *1 Tim. 6. 3, 4. Jude 4. 1 Pet. 2. 16.* or corrupting the word of God with Philosophy, and that Science which is falsely so called, *1 Tim. 6. 4, 20, 21.* yea, some it seems there did arise that turned all into an Allegory, and said the resurrection was past already, and so made shipwrack of faith, and overthrew the faith of some, *1 Tim. 1. 19, 20. 2 Tim. 2. 16, 18.*

2. That the end of those that speak perverse things is, to draw Disciples after them, and herein they are distinguished from the true Ministers of Christ, the end of whose conversation is, Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever, *Heb. 13. 7, 8.* These that speak perverse things serve not our Lord Jesus, but their own belly, magnifie not him in and unto all, but seek to espouse men to themselves, that they may have

have preheminence and maintainance: Whereas those that are like minded with the Apostles, endeavour to espouse men to Christ, that they may present them a chaste Virgin to him; and aim at this, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, and in lifting up Jesus Christ they seek the good of men, and especial good of believers, though they be as reprobates, *2 Cor.* 11. 23. & 13. 7. *1 Thes.* 2. 5, 6.

3. That because such may arise (speaking perverse things to draw away Disciples after them, therefore it behoves others, yea, all believers to watch, that seeing they know this before, they may not be removed from him that called them into the grace of Christ, *2 Pet.* 3. 17. *Gal.* 1. 6. It is good for them to take heed what they hear (especially when God is removing faithful and eminent instruments) even from such as are over them, *Mark* 4. 24. and not take things on trust. Surely we are very ready, when once we have an high esteem of men, to receive all for truth they say, and not to bring it to the light, and from hence much evil springs: for we rob Christ of that honour that appertains to him, and hurt our selves if we so receive what is said, though it be truth we receive, while our faith stands in the wisdom or authority of men; and while we receive the word of God as the word of men, because of our esteem of their goodness, wisdom, learning, it works not effectually in us, *1 Thes.* 2. 13. And if those we so esteem err from the truth, we are apted to follow them, and so the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch; good it is therefore to examine what such say, that if it be truth, we may receive it as the word of God; if they speak perverse things, as they do when they consent not to whollom words, *Prov.* 8. 8. we may reject it, according to that, despise not prophecyings, wherein men speak to edification, exhortation and comfort; try all things, in those prophecyings you may not despise, hold fast that which is good; abstain from all appearance of evil, *1 Thes.* 5. 20, 22. with *1 Cor.* 14. 3. The Jews at Bera are commended as more noble than those in *Thessalonica*, in that they received the word with all readines of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things (declared by the Apostle Paul and Silas) were so; therefore many of them believed, *Act.*

17. 10, 12. and the Apostle exhorts the believers to judge what he said to them, 1 Cor. 10. 15. and surely then we may well try all others that are of our selves, and not therefore to receive what they bring, because they are such as have received and declared the Gospel.

4. That wherefo we are to watch, that we may discern and avoid any perverse things that may be spoken by some among our selves; it is God, and the word of his grace, as before is said, by attending unto wisdoms words, and inclining our ear unto her sayings, &c. we may put perverse lips far from us, so as not to use them our selves, nor be corrupted by others that have them, Prov. 4. 20, 24. they are powerful to deliver us from the man that speaks froward (or perverse) things, Prov. 2. 1, 12. yea, if any should turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned to fables, yet here-through believers may be instruments of saving themselves, and them that hear them, 1 Tim. 4. 16. Hence when the Apostle saith, *They went out from us, but they were not of us*, (namely, immediately before their departure; he saith not, they were never of us, but there was a secret departure in heart before they left them as to bodily presence.) He adds, *But ye have an unction from the holy one*, (viz. the truth, Christ as declared in the Gospel) *and ye know all things—Let that abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning—And ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father* (in their peculiar favour, care and protection) *these things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you*, 1 Joh. 2. 19, 26. See also 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2. & 3. 1, 2. Jude 18, 21. Believers need not that any man teach them (as to matter or manner) but as the anointing, the testimony of Christ, teacheth of all things, and is truth, and is no lye, 1 Joh. 2. 27. to that therefore let us have our recourse alwayes, and especially when God is taking away, as here, eminent and faithful watchmen; we have then the more abundant need to have the great things of God's Law alwayes in remembrance (in which we may have fellowship with the Father and Son, 1 Joh. 1. 3.) and that believers might have these things alwayes in remembrance was the Apostles indeavour, 2 Pet. 1. 12, 14. 1 Tim. 6. 12, 14. 2 Tim. 1. 8, 13. &c. 2. 2.

And though the gifts which Christ hath given to men be
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very useful, and given to a gracious end; yet because the persons that have them are men subject to like passions with others, and so may possibly speak perverse things; good therefore it is for believers to pray for themselves and one for another, that their love may abound in all knowledge and judgment, that they may try things that differ, and so approve things that are excellent, that they may be sincere, and without offence till the coming of Christ, otherwise they will not so be, *Phil. 1. 9, 10.* Oh, that there were not too much cause to say, That so great is our dulness of hearing, we have not our spiritual senses exercised to discern both good (to imbrace it) and evil (to avoid it) as *Heb. 5. 11, 14.* but according to our account of the persons we hear, such account we have of what they say, if we be jealous of them, we suspect what they say, when they speak right things; and if we think highly of them, we are apt to drink down all they say, and therein to think more highly of them than is meet.

Oh! that we did more commit our selves to God, and the word of his grace, for his teaching and preservation, that we might know what to hear and receive, and what to refuse; Let us take fast hold of instruction, and though those that speak perverse things, pretend word as from the Apostles for what they say, yet let us not for trial of them, and preservation from them, wave the Gospel, or seek help any where else, but still hold fast the things delivered which we have been taught by the Apostles, by word or Epistle; as the Apostle instructs the *Thessalonians*, when he beseeches them not to be moved or troubled, neither by Spirit, Word, or Letter as from them, *2 Thes. 2. 2, 15.* Let us not leave the Scripture because they pervert it in their glosses, but still hold that fast, as our Saviour hath set us an example, *Mat. 4. 6, 7.* and in the light and instruction thereof, that we may not be carried about with divers & strange doctrines, let us consider the end of their conversation that speak unto us in their word, or by writing or personal conference; if that be Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, to day, & for ever, though weaknesses be found, acknowledge them that are such, and so walk, *Heb. 13. 7, 9.*

And be we all followers together of the Apostles, and of those that have spoken to us the Word of the Lord, *Phil. 3. 17.*
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looking diligently unto ourselves, and one to another that none fail of the grace of God, that no root of bitterness (no evil spirit or doctrine) springing up, trouble us, and thereby many be defiled, *See Heb. 12. 15, 16.* and thereto warning one another in all wisdom according to capacity; and let us observe that counsel and instruction given by the Apostle Jude, ver. 20, 21. *Ye beloved, building up your selves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost, keep your selves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

Having thus spoken largely to the former part, *viz.* the Apostles commendation of them to God, and the word of his grace, at this time of his departure, we shall briefly add somewhat to the second thing at first proposed, which is contained in the words, in which we have,

1. A further Declaration of the excellency of the person and thing to which he commends them, laid down by way of motive to ingage them to commit themselves to God, and the word of his grace. Which (God, and Word of his grace) is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

In which we have these two branches.

1. This God and Word is able to build you up.
2. And to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

1. This God and Word is able to build you up.

In which we shall speak to these two things.

1. Shew what is meant by building up.
2. What is imported in this branch of the motive.

1. Then, by building up, is meant, a making them to increase, or causing them to grow up, and rise higher. This expression of building refers to two things in Scripture; sometimes to a place of habitation, *2 Chron. 2. 1, 12.* and sometimes to a family or household, *Ruth. 4. 11.* and according to this double acceptation, these two things are meant.

1. An increasing of them who were already gathered to Christ, and making them as to themselves and the society to prosper, and ascend higher and higher into Jesus Christ, and those things that are excellent, both with respect to themselves particularly, and as with respect to the Church or socie-

society, of which these, to whom he speaks directly, were members and overseers; a growing up into Christ in all things, which is the Head, namely into the knowledge of him who is the Son of God in our nature, accepted to all the ends of his undertaking, and unity with him, which is called, edifying the Church, *Eph. 4. 12, 13, 15.* a growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *2 Pet. 3. 18.* and so it is an abounding in the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom (even in the whole of Christ) and in all spiritual understanding, namely, such a discerning as is given by the Spirit in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, *Col. 1. 9.* and growing more into union with Christ, and conformity to him; a more hearty imbracement of him and the word of his grace. And so a being united more one to another in love, and growing up together in the virtues of Christ; adding to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity, *2 Pet. 1. 5, 7.* setting their affections more on things above, having their conversation in heaven, and expectation from heaven; and in all a going on to perfection, and being more firm, settled, and established by walking in Christ as they have received him, *Col. 2. 6, 7.*

2. An increasing of them as to number, and so multiplying of them by an addition of others to them, gathering others to Christ and the Church, besides those that are gathered, as *Isa. 56. 8.* which is the issue of the former; for while they are edified in knowledge, faith, and all virtues of Christ, they come to be multiplied, according to that, *Act. 9. 31.* then had the Churches rest, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and comfort of the holy Ghost, were multiplied. So the whole body growing up into Christ in all things, is said to make an increase of the body, to the edifying of it self in love, *Eph. 4. 15, 16.* An adding to the Lord, and to the Church continually, till we all come to the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, *Act. 2. 41, 46. & 11. 24. Eph. 4. 12, 13.* even as an house or family is said to be built by the birth and addition of children to it, *Gen. 16. 2. Dint. 25. 9.* 3. Now

2. Now then in that it is said, *which is able to build you up*, herein is imported and signified to us,

1. That those to whom he speaks were in some measure come unto, and built upon the foundation of God, and so born of the incorruptible seed of the Word: So much is signified in that he saith, *which is able to build you up*, that they were come to, and built upon Jesus Christ, according to that; *To him coming as unto a living Stone—Ye also as lively stones are built up*, 8cc. 1 Pet. 2. 4, 5. Eph. 2. 20, 21. and indeed the foundation on which they were built, and seed of which they were begotten, it was the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever, and which by the Gospel is preached to us; 1 Pet. 1. 23, 25. namely, Jesus Christ, who was delivered to death for our offences, and raised again for our justification; *And other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. 3. 11. he as witnessed of by the Prophets; and manifested by the Apostles, is the foundation which God hath prepared and laid, the bottom ground, or first thing for men to come unto, and be built upon. And hence he is called, the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, *viz.* that upon which they were built, they were begotten to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, as this was discovered of God in the Gospels. 1 Pet. 1. 3. and which they have doctrinally and Ministerially laid, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, Eph. 2. 20. he was at first declared by God when mankind had departed from him, in order to his being brought back again to him, in that first Oracle, *The seed of the woman shall break the head of the Serpent*, Gen. 3. 15. Therein was assured, that Jesus Christ should spoyl the plot of Satan, who thought, and devised to have separated us for ever from God, and destroy and spoil his principality which he had gotten over mankind, and so, that he should destroy the works of the Devil, 1 Job. 3. 8. and so he was witnessed of by the Prophets, as the head of the corner, Psal. 118. 22. and as the foundation, Isa. 28. 16. with 1 Pet. 2. 6. and so laid in the revelation of the mystery by the Apostles as wise Master-builders, 1 Cor. 3. 10. and God hath raised him from the dead, and given him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God, 1 Pet. 1. 21.

This was the foundation on which they were built, even Jesus

Jesus Christ, who by the grace of God tasted death for every man, and is raised again in the same body in which he was crucified and hanged on a Tree, according to the Scriptures, who is the foundation of God, and which standeth sure, and is laid for a foundation to them who are disobedient; and is the foundation of all unfeigned believers. Hence he is called, *the beginning of our confidence*, Heb. 3. 14. even of the Apostles, and of all believers confidence, for they have all but one beginning of their confidence, and that is Christ, *who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things he should have the prebeminence*, Col. 1. 18. Heb. 12. 2. he is the foundation, and not any changes, frames, qualifications, works or gifts given some above others; not any revelations, or visions, in which the Apostles were preferred before others.

Many there are indeed who have as their foundation on which they are bottomed, and seed of which they are begotten, somewhat that was not crucified for them; either the enjoyment of his Word and Ordinances, Luk. 13. 26, 27. or that they have prophesied in his name, and in his name have cast out Devils, and in his name have done many wonderful works, Mat. 7. 21, 23. but the having as the beginning of their confidence such like things, is but building the house upon the sand, which will deceive them, for he never knew or owned any that were built on these things, as he doth those who are built upon Jesus Christ the rock, as declared to us in the Gospel. Compare Luk. 13. 27. & Mat. 7. 23. with 2 Tim. 2. 19. and in trusting in these things, and being bottom'd hereon, they are workers of iniquity, and seek to cast down Christ from his excellency, and to rob him of that honour the Father hath given unto him, and which he will not give to any other person or thing. And yet how many such are there, who either trust in themselves that they are righteous, like the old Pharisees, they confide in the flesh, and think, and hope, that because they run not with others to the same excess of riot, but on the other hand; fast, and pray, and give alms, and frequent the assemblies of God's people, though yet they do not his words in suffering the loss of all things for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, that they may win him, and be found in him: that therefore God will

be gracious unto them, and they shall have eternal life, *Luk. 18. 9, 11. Phil. 3. 4, 10.* or trust to themselves that they are Christs, like the new Pharisees; *2 Cor. 10. 7.* who being convinced of the shortness and unprofitableness of their own works of righteousness to render them acceptable before God, disclaim it as filthy rags, *Isa. 64. 6.* and yet they have as the beginning of their confidence, some changes or alterations in them, some marks and signs, some first act of repentance, or love to God; before they are perswaded of the love of God to them, or know certainly whether God hath loved them; and so from somewhat fore-wrought in them, or done by them (before they dare believe that God loves them) from hence they conclude that Christ died for them, and God loves them, and righteousness is prepared for them; and so the first thing that springs up hope, the seed of which they are first begotten to some kind of perswasion of God's peculiar love to them, and bottom-ground of their confidence, it is not Christ's death for sinners, ungodly ones, all men; every man, as is declared in the testimony, but something in themselves, some secret thing with them; which will in conclusion prove a lying refuge; and however though for a season they may rejoyce and be confident, yet their foundation will be overthrown with the flood of God's anger (as *Job 22. 16.*) though now they may cry peace and safety, and think themselves to be happy persons while they are in health and prosperity, and because they find the life of their hands are not grieved, *Isa. 57. 10.* yet this bed of seeming ease will be shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and this covering narrower than that a man can wrap himself in it, when the Lord shall rise up as in mount *Perazim*, and be wroth as in the valley of *Gibeon*, that he may do his work, his strange work, &c. *Isa. 28. 12, 20, 21, 22.* When the rain descends, and floods come, and winds blow, and beat upon that house built upon the sand, it will fall, and great will be the fall thereof, *Mat. 7. 22, 26, 27.* God is now in his Gospel graciously declaring that their righteousness and their works shall not profit them, and by the weapons thereof pulling down mens strong holds, casting down imaginations, scaling the City of the mighty, and casting down the strength of the confidence thereof, that men might count what things are

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gainful to them loss for Christ, and go on to count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of him; but if now, when his hand is lifted up, they will not see, they shall hereafter see, and be ashamed that they have made lyes their refuge, and hid themselves under falsehood, *Isa. 57. 12. 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. Prov. 21. 32. Isa. 26. 11.* Now therefore be ye not mockers, reject not that rest to which he is calling, that foundation which he hath laid in *Zion*, and listen not to the builders who in all ages have disallowed the living stone, who is the foundation and corner-stone, lest your bands be made strong; but incline your ear, and come unto him who is the rock, and whose work is perfect, *Isa. 28. 12, 16, 22. Psal. 118. 22. Mat. 21. 42. Act. 4. 11, 12. 1 Pet. 2. 4, 7.*

Yea, and he is the foundation as distinguished from the purposes and decrees of God, and so from any purpose of his which he hath purposed in himself concerning his loving some with peculiar manner of love: Indeed he was purposed from the beginning to be the foundation, and this was his decree, the sum of his decrees concerning sinful mankind, and out of the bowels of which all his decrees issue concerning them; that he would raise Christ in due time from the dead, *Psal. 2. 7.* and hath fulfilled that promise and purpose; but not his purpose and decree simply, but Jesus Christ is the foundation, the one and only foundation, *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ:* And this appears evidently from that place some men alledge to prove some purpose of God to be the foundation, *viz. 2 Tim. 2. 19. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure,* &c. Which saying is not only opposed unto the effect of the evil doctrines of the false teachers, namely, *they overthrow the faith of some*; nevertheless, notwithstanding they have corrupted some, and removed them from Christ the foundation, yet the foundation of God stands steddy; but also it is opposed to the doctrine it self of those vain babblers; they said, *the resurrection is past already*: meaning (as appears) by resurrection, some metaphorical, or allegorical resurrection; they said not there was no resurrection, but they said there was no resurrection of the dead, like those *1 Cor. 15. 12.* and to consequently that Christ was not raised in that body in which he

Bare out sins on the Tree, and so indeavoured to raze the foundation; for if *Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins*, saith the Apostle; preaching, faith, and hope is in vaine: But notwithstanding what they say, Christ is risen from the dead, and is become the first fruits of them that sleep; and so the foundation of God stands sure, notwithstanding their babblings and batteries made against him. Compare *2 Tim. 2. 18, 19.* with *ven. 7. 8.* & *1 Cor. 15. 12, 20.* Yea, it further appears in that place that Christ is the foundation, and not some purpose in God concerning some peculiar manner of love to, and owning of some persons; for his knowing, owning and loving with peculiar manner of love, is not the foundation, but the seal of the foundation; the foundation hath this seal for the evidence and confirmation of its steddyneſſe and goodneſſe, the Lord knoweth, owneth, approveth them that are his, or its, that are built and abide upon the foundation, and so no purpose simply, but Christ as declared in the testimony is the foundation. And much less is that the foundation of God which men call a purpose or decree of his that is not so, *viz.* such a purpose as in which he hath absolutely purposed in himself, and decreed a certain number of persons to salvation before they were born; for this is no purpose of his, but a device of men who are ignorant of the truth as it is in Jesus [See what my Brother and helper in the Lord Mr. *Tho. Moor* hath spoken more largely to this in his explicite declaration of the Testimony, Page 389, 410.] And so in coming unto, and being built upon this foundation, they became living stones, and were made a spiritual house and habitation of God through the Spirit, *1 Pet. 2. 4, 5.* their sins were forgiven them for Christ's name sake on which they believed, which is even the sum of all blessedneſſe, *Rom. 4. 5, 7.* and that where through he gives all knowledge and injoyment of further salvation, *Luk. 1. 77.* and therefore it seems, the receiving the forgiveness of sins, answers unto, and is put for the being built up. Compare this, *Al. 20. 32.* with *Chap. 26. 18.* or he quickned them together with Christ, and made them lively stones, and a spiritual house, having forgiven them all trespasses, *Col. 2. 13.* with *1 Pet. 2. 5.* And so in being bottomed on Christ as preached in the word of his grace, and united to him who is originally and completely the

the temple of God, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, in whom God dwells, and will dwell forever, they also became the temple of God, in whom he dwells, and walks, in and through whom he manifests himself, and so they were made of the household of God, 1 Cor. 3. 16. & 6. 19. 2 Cor. 6. 16. Eph. 2. 19, 22.

And as this instruction is for admonition to them that are built on this foundation of God, and made of this temple of the living God, that they should be clean, and not defile the habitation of God which is holy (devoted and dedicated for peculiar use and service to him) with any filthiness of flesh or spirit, lest they provoke God to destroy them, and suffer the Boar out of the wood, and the wild beast of the field to devour them, even those grievous wolves before spoken of, for he cannot indure that his habitation should be polluted, but holiness becomes his house for ever, 1 Cor. 3. 17, 18. 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17. & 7. 1. Psal. 93. 5.

So the consideration hereof, that in coming to Christ, and being built on him, they were made a spiritual house, is of great usefulness to them to encourage them in well-doing to commit themselves to God, and the word of his grace, for his receiving them, and being a father to them, when he deprives of faithful instruments, for he hath a favour for such; they are his building, his family, the sanctuary and true tabernacle which the Lord hath pitched, and not man: no servant hath such right in them, or love to, or care for them as he. This man is counted worthy of more honour than *Moses*, though *Moses* was faithful in all his house; inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. *Moses* was of the house, and faithful as a servant in the house, but he that built all things is God, the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; And *Moses* verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, &c. but Christ as a Son over his own house; they are his own house, pitched by him, his own family, the children God hath given to him, members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones; even begotten by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and holding fast the confidence and the rejoycing of the hope firm to the end, he doth and will nourish and cherish them when in the wilderness, and guide them therein like a flock, Heb. 3. 1, 6. Eph. 5. 29, 30.

with *Luk. 24. 39. Rev. 12. 14. Psal. 78. 52, 53.* he is the Minister of them, the High-Priest over the house of God, who is passed into the heavens, and entered within the veil for them (specially, to appear as their Advocate, who is also the propitiation for their sins, to forgive their iniquities, to plead their cause, manage their matters, fight their battels, subdue their iniquities, sanctifie and cleanse them with the washing of water by the Word, teach them, and lead them into all truth, send from above, and save them from the reproach of those who would swallow them up, and cause all things to work together for good to them. *Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people, because there is none like unto thy God, the God of Jesurun, who rideth upon the heaven for thy help, and in his excellency on the skie; the eternal God is thy refuge, &c. Deut. 33. 26, 29.* Oh therefore cry unto him and say, Thou art my refuge (from mine oppressors, those grievous wolves that come to devour) and my portion in the Land of the living, when refuge failes, and no man cares for thy soul; commit thy self, thy way and works unto him, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass, and (though thou now walkest in darkness) he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment, as the noon-day, *Psal. 142. 4. 5. & 37. 4, 7.* Though now the Lord calls thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and hath ordered to thee cause of lamentation, in taking away the pleasant teats at which thou hast sucked, and through which he hath conveyed the sincere milk of the word, yet thy maker is thy husband, the Lord is thy Shepherd, thou shalt not want; *He will make thee to lye down in green pastures, and lead thee besides the still waters, &c. Ob trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is the rock of ages, everlasting strength, Isa. 54. 5, 7. & 26. 4.*

Yea, and in that they were come unto Jesus Christ the foundation and head of the corner, and so made a spiritual house, and from the head sitly joyned together and compacted; it was for instruction to them, and is for instruction to those of the same body, to love one another with a pure heart fervently, as those whose hearts are purified and principled in obeyed the truth through the spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, Jesus Christ is the corner stone that couples the building together, and in coming unto him they are baptized

baptized into one body, and made to drink into one spirit, called in one hope of their calling, &c. that they should endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and that they may do so, the way is, to endeavour it with all lowliness and meekness, &c. All lowliness is the first thing instructed to unto this endeavour, namely, lowliness of mind, suffering our pride and high thoughts of our selves by occasion of our learning, knowledge, gifts, utterance, attainments, riches, &c. to be purged out, and hidden from us; and lowliness in our words, demeanours and looks; having low eyes (for only by pride cometh contention) that so brotherly love may be continued and preserved amongst us. This is the use the Apostle makes of this instruction to this Church; for after he had been saying, *ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostles, &c. and are builded together* (even those that are taught, and those that teach, the teachers not being the Church alone, nor made of the true tabernacle at all, because chosen by men, but both together in coming to Christ are made) *an habitation of God through the Spirit*, Eph. 2. 20, 22. He having begun to come to the usefulness hereof in Chap. 3. 1. digresses all that Chapter; and Chap. 4. 1, 6. he shews them what ingagement this put upon them to love as brethren, and, as a prisoner of the Lord beseeches them (not first to relieve him in his bonds, but) to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and directs them to that firstly, as a main thing in which they might walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called; they were called to the foundation and corner stone, and made members one of another; and what more suitable hereto, than to cleave to the Lord with full purpose, and one to another in the fear of the Lord. And so from the like ground and motive the Apostle Peter instructs the believers to love one another with a pure heart fervently, and to that end to lay apart all evil and bitter roots. See 1 Pet. 1. 22, 25; & 2. 1, 5. And oh how good and pleasant a thing is it for brethren to dwell together in unity; and especially then when he is removing those that have been useful helpers of them in the Lord. Hence the Apostle, when he takes his leave of the *Corinthians*, powerfully presses this exhortation on them. *Finally brethren, farewell; be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you*, 2 Cor. 13. 11.

2. In that he saith, *which is able to build you up*, he doth therein intimate, that though they were built upon the foundation of God, and so made & framed into an habitation of God through the spirit, yet they needed still to be further built up, and to grow up more into Jesus Christ in all things, into the knowledge of him, union and fellowship with him, and conformity unto him; even those amongst them who might have attained most, those who were overseers over the rest, to whom he directly speaks, needed still and further to be built up, and to go on unto perfection; they were not yet perfect as to attainment. Though they might be perfect, sincere and undefiled in the way, and fixed herein to walk and to seek all wisdom, righteousness and strength, all washing and cleansing by an exercise of faith in Christ, and so were blessed; yet they were not come to their journey's end, but were yet to run with patience the race set before them, laying aside every weight, and that sin that so easily besets, *Psal.* 119. 1, 2. *Heb.* 12. 1. So the Apostle *Paul* saith concerning himself, that he had not already attained, neither was already perfect, though he had suffered the loss of all things for Christ, and did count them as dung, that he might win him, and be found in him; but did follow after, if that he might apprehend that for which also he was apprehended of Christ Jesus; and instructs others who were perfect to be like minded with him, namely, to count that they had not attained, either were already perfect, *Phil.* 3. 12, 13. yea, indeed he signifies that he should not attain, or be perfect as to attainment till the resurrection of the dead; for though the spirits of just men, that dye in the Lord are perfect, yet they wait for the adoption, the redemption of the body; and so it is said of those that died in the faith, that these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect, *Phil.* 3. 11, 12. *Heb.* 12. 39, 40. Though believers are compleat in Christ, who by the one offering of his personal body once for all hath perfected for ever in himself, and that provision he hath made, and Covenant he hath sealed, them that are sanctified, so as there needs no more offering for sin; yet in themselves they are not compleat, nor compleatly in him, and are therefore instructed to walk in Christ as they have received him, rooted and

and built up in him; and to have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water, *Col. 2. 10.* with *ver. 2, 7.* *Heb. 10. 14, 22.* their being built up is by degrees, they go from strength to strength, *Psal. 84. 7.* and are changed from glory to glory, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* And hence they are said to grow like a Cedar, *Psal. 92. 12.* to grow up, *Eph. 4. 15.* to increase, *1 Thes. 4. 10.* *Col. 2. 19.* to abound more and more, *1 Thes. 4. 1.* to press toward the mark, *Phil. 3. 14.* to run the race, *Heb. 12. 1.* All which expressions signifie, that the believers while here in mortal bodies have not yet attained to compleatness in themselves, or to a compleat injoyment of what is to be possessed, and which while here they seek and wait for.

Here, though he that is perfect in knowledge is with them abiding in Christ; yet they are not perfect in knowledge, but are instructed to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savour Jesus Christ, *2 Pet. 3. 18.* And the Apostle prays for these *Ephesians*, who were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation, &c. *The eyes of their understandings being enlightened that they might (further) know what is the hope of his calling, &c.* *Eph. 1. 13, 20.* and that they might know the love of Christ, *Chap. 3. 14, 19.* And hence that holy man so oftentimes prays, that God would open his eyes, make him understand, teach him the way of his statutes, give him understanding, teach him knowledge, &c. *Psal. 119. 18, 19, 37, 33, 34. 64, 66.* yea, the Apostle *Paul*, who as a wise Master-builder laid the foundation, and preached the Gospel according to the revelation of the mystery, affirms of himself, and other believers, that now they knew in part, and not perfectly, *1 Cor. 13. 9, 12.*

And so they are not perfect in their faith, in their hearty persuasion and imbracement of what God hath testified of his Son, and dependance on him according thereto, so as to live the life they now live in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us, and to walk by faith; but many weaknesses and mixtures are found with them, and much shortness according to what the Apostle signifies concerning the *Thessalonians*, where he saith, *night and*

day praying, expecting that we might perfect that which is lacking in your faith; and he thanks God because their faith would grow, *Eccl. 2. 26. Psal. 138* and tells the *Corinthians* that he had hope that when their faith was increased, they should be enlarged by them, *2 Cor. 10. 15*; and surely this appears when God is ordering temptations and tryals of the faith to them; by their weakness and readiness to faint, and be *weakened* as they have not yet attained unto a most full Assurance of faith; what doubtings and aptness to be calling into question God's love and faithfulness? what jealousies and fears concerning him, as if he would leave and forsake them? what readiness to be looking for vain help, and turning the eyes this way, and that way is found with such the Scriptures testify, and the experiences of such confirm? *Psal. 31. 22. & 77. 7, 19. & 116. 11*. How oft our Saviour reprehends his Disciples on this account, may be seen, *Mat. 6. 30. & 8. 26. & 14. 31. & 16. 8. Mark 4. 40. Luk. 8. 25*. yea, when they said, *We believe that thou comest forth from God*; Jesus answered them, *Do ye now believe? Behold the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered every one to his own, &c.* *John. 16. 30, 32*. That hour that came upon him made discovery of them, that there was yet somewhat lacking in their faith; how confident soever they were of themselves; yea, it may seem there was sometime some shortness found with *Abraham* the father of the faithful, though not impured; of whom it was said, he staggered not at the promise through unbelief; but was strong in faith; for when God promised that *Sarah* should be a Mother of Nations, &c. *Abraham fell on his face and laughed—and said unto God, O that I might live! live! as thou has said, &c.* *Gen. 17. 17, 19*. and surely believers have need to pray, *Lord help our unbelief*, as he, *Mark. 9. 24*. or however as the Disciples, *Lord increase our faith*, *Luk. 17. 7*. and so of *David* *Psalm 138*.

Non are they yet perfectly conformed to Christ, and filled with the fruits of righteousness; there is yet sin dwelling in them, and in many things they offend him, and need therefore to be still sanctified and washed with the washing of water by the word; to which end Christ gives himself to them for them, *Eph. 5. 25, 26*; *Thy 5. 22*; their love to Christ, and God in him, may yet abound in all knowledge and judgment;

judgment, and though they love one another, and all men, yet they may increase and abound therein. Hence they are instructed to add to their faith virtue, &c. *Phil. 1. 9, 11. 1 Thes. 3. 12, 13. Eccl. 1. 9, 10. 1 Pet. 1. 4, 8.*

And as this instruction is useful to preserve us from the error of those wicked and Antichristian spirits, who boast that they are sinless and perfect, and enjoy the fulness of all blessing, and that they have need of nothing; while yet they are poor, and miserable, and blind; who though they are pure in their own eyes, yet are not washed from their filthiness; *Woe unto them, for they have received their consolation.* And also from their swelling words of vanity, who being puffed up with their fleshly mind, and not holding the head, boast of their merits and works of supererogation, &c. seeing it shews our shortness and incompleateness in our selves while here, that pride may be hidden from us, and no flesh may glory in his presence, but that even unfeigned believers may confess that when they have done all that is commanded them, they are unprofitable servants.

So also it is proper, as viewed in the glorious Gospel, to move us continually to come unto Jesus Christ, and to give more earnest heed to the things we have heard, that with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* And this leads us unto another instruction contained in this branch of the declaration of the excellency of this person, and word to which he commits them. Namely,

3. That God and the word of his grace is able to build up believers; this is the work of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; and the means by which he doth it, is the Gospel of himself, according as it is vouchsafed; he gives all things that pertain to life and godliness, but he gives it through the knowledge of himself, *2 Pet. 1. 3.* Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of the faith, *Heb. 12. 2.* the Alpha and the Omega; he who hath begun the good work, and who also will perform it, *Phil. 1. 6, 7.* he is the foundation, and he shall bring forth the head stone with shoutings, crying grace, grace unto it, *Zech. 4. 6, 7.*

Jesus Christ is the foundation of God, and yet he is so laid

in the word of his grace, and those that come unto him are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, as before. It is his work and office, to open mens eyes, and to turn men from idols to himself, but he doth it in preaching the Gospel, *Isa. 42. 6, 7.* with *Chap. 61. 1.* The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, giving wisdom to them that have none, and revealing him in beholding whom they may be made wise; and the Law and doctrine of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, both at first, and continually, *Psa. 19. 7, 8.* Hence the Apostle was sent with this to open the eys of Jews and Gentiles, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, *Act. 26. 18, 23.* He gives unto, &c makes them partakers of the forgiveness of sins that turn unto him; but he doth give it, & they receive it through his name, even through the word of faith, *Act. 5. 31.* with *Chap. 10. 43.* & *26. 18.* He gives wisdom to the wise, but he gives it through this word of wisdom; *The Lord giveth wisdom, and out of his mouth* (his doctrine) *cometh understanding*; the spirit of wisdom and understanding is still and further given in the knowledge of him, *Prov. 2. 1, 6.* *Eph. 1. 17.* *Job. 7. 37, 39.* He quickens them to a lively hope, but he doth it by his resurrection from the dead, as declared in the Scriptures, *1 Pet. 1. 3.* his words are spirit and life; his word quickens them, *Job. 6. 63.* *Psal. 119. 50, 93.* He it is that increaseth the faith of believers, but he doth it in and by his testimony; he hath written it, that those that believe may believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God, that they may go on believing & be more strong in faith & that their trust may be in the Lord he hath written to them excellent things in counsels and knowledge, *Prov. 22. 17, 20.* *1 Job. 5. 10, 13.* He is faithful who will establish them, and keep them from evil, *2 Thes. 3. 3.* but he doth it according to the Gospel; they are established in the faith, *Rom. 16. 25.* *Col. 2. 7.* He doth and will sanctifie them throughout, but he doth it through his truth, and his word is truth, *1 Thes. 5. 23.* *Job. 17. 17, 19.* he sanctifies and cleanses them with the washing of water by the word, *Eph. 5. 26.* He fills them with the fruits of righteousness, and makes their souls like a watered garden, but it is by his Gospel, this brings forth

forth fruit in them, and they that delight themselves in his Law, and meditate therein day and night, shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season, *Col. 1. 6. Psal. 1. 2, 3.* he doth build them up, but it is by the word of his grace, and they are therefore instructed to be building up themselves on their most holy faith, *Jude 20.* In short, they are kept by the power of God (the Gospel of Christ) through faith unto salvation, *1 Pet. 1. 5.* with *Rom. 1. 16, 17.* they live by faith, and therein they may go on to perfection, as far as here they are capable, *Heb. 6. 1.* it is able to make wise unto salvation, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished and perfected unto all good works, *2 Tim. 3. 15, 17.* and those gifts which Christ having ascended up on high, hath given, and which continue with us in the Gospel, are for perfecting the Saints for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, &c. *Eph. 4. 12, 13.*

And this is of usefulness to those that go before others in the word of the Lord, yea and to all unfeigned believers, to beware of Philosophy, and vain deceit; for in Christ, as preached in the Gospel, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and in him believers are compleat, *Col. 2. 3, 10.*

And that they turn not to the Law, or any other doctrine or tradition of the Elders, to perfect that by the flesh which was begun by the spirit; for this Law and doctrine of the Lord is perfect in it self and in its effect, for convincing the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and turning and converting the soul, and for teaching believers, and guiding them into all truth, and shewing them things to come; and in walking after the Spirit in the testimony, the righteousness of the Law shall be fulfilled in men; he will put his Laws in their hearts, and write them in their minds, *Job. 16. 7, 15. Psal. 19. 7, 8. Rom. 8. 4. 2 Cor. 3. 2, 3. Heb. 10. 16.*

And this shews unto us wherein their great strength lies, and how they may be preserved from all that would corrupt them, and whereby they may be strong in the Lord; this Gospel is the power of God, it is able to build them up who ever would pull them down; they cannot build up themselves by

by any wisdom or strength that is in them as of them, but this is a powerful word, whereby they may overcome the wicked one; and overcome the world; be enabled to withstand in the evil day, and having done all things to stand, *Eph. 6. 10, 17.* & *Job. 2. 13, 14.* & *4. 4.* & *5. 4, 5.* *18.* to the end they may cleave to the Lord with full purpose, and love his Law, the perfect Law of liberty, and it might be their merit all night and day.

2. He further shews the excellency of God, and the word of his grace, in saying, *And (which is able) to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.* Which is still powerful to move us to commit our selves thereto.

We shall here briefly consider,

1. What is this inheritance?

2. Who are the heirs of this inheritance?

3. How God and the word of his grace doth give, and is able to give them this inheritance?

1. What is this inheritance? It is not the riches, honour, and great estates here below that men are eagerly seeking after, and blessing themselves in the enjoyment of; it is not of this world, *Job. 18. 36.* nor to be tully and gloriously enjoyed in the time of this world: And this may be seen in the words: It is not of this world, because it is the inheritance of the Saints or sanctified ones; now it's evident that the inheritances of this world are not their peculiar portion, for God gives the greatest part of these things unto those that are the men of this world, they have their portion in this world; their children are full, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes, *Psal. 17. 14.* those that set their mouths against the heavens, they have more than heart could wish, they prosper in the world, and increase in riches: God fills their houses with good things, *Psal. 73. 5, 12.* *Job 21. 7, 13.* & *12. 17, 18.* whereas generally they are the poor of this world, who are rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom, which God hath prepared; many of them are as having nothing, having no inheritance here, but are many times hungry, and thirsty, and cold, and naked, *Jam. 2. 5.* & *1 Cor. 6. 10.* And besides; those of them that have here any inheritance, they have it not as sanctified ones, but as men, sons of Adam, and upon a natural and civil account; *The earth be hath given to the children of men,* *Plal. 115. 16.*

And

And this inheritance here spoken of is not fully and gloriously to be enjoyed in the time of this world, because it is to be enjoyed among all them that are sanctified; many of whom are gone out of this world, and many that hereafter will be of this number being not yet in the world; but none of them shall be made perfect, or perfectly and completely enjoy this without the rest of their brethren; those that have died in the faith have not received the promises, and for are not made perfect without the surviving of that body; and those that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep, *Heb. xii. 39, 40. 1 Thes. 4. 15.*

Yea, as the sanctified ones, who are the heirs, are more excellent than their neighbors; *Prov. xii. 26.* so is their inheritance more excellent; it is an inheritance incorruptible, and undecayed; and that fades not away, reserved in the heavens for them, *1 Pet. i. 4.* and so not like the inheritances of this world, which are subject to corruption and pollution, and which will fade away; for riches are not for ever, nor doth the crown endure to all generations, *Prov. 27. 24.* and the rich man here shall fade away in his ways, *Jam. i. 10.*

The inheritance then here spoken of is a glorious and eternal inheritance, which all that are sanctified shall be made partakers of when those that sleep in Jesus shall be raised, and the living of that body shall be changed, *1 Cor. 15. 51. 1 Thes. 4. 15.* which having spoken somewhat before, I shall say the brief here, and shall say,

1. They shall inherit the earth, when God shall make all things new, even new heavens, and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness, *2 Pet. 3. 13.* So it is often assured and promised; they that wait up in the Lord shall inherit the earth; the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace; such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth, *Psal. 37. 9, 11, 34. & 119. 11.* And thus our Saviour confirms, saying, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth, Mat. 5. 5.* and therein they shall possess and inherit the Land of Canaan, which is made an heavenly Canaan, as it shall be, *For the Lord will comfort Zion, he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord, Heb.*

11, 16. *Iſa.* 51. 3. This was contained in the Covenant which God made with *Abraham*, &c. That he would give unto him the Land of *Canaan*, the lot of their inheritance, even for an inheritance to himself and his seed, which Covenant is not yet performed according as promised, for he gave *Abraham* none inheritance in it, no not so much as to let his foot on, yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed, &c. *By faith he sojourned in the Land of promise, as in a strange Countrey, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; yea, though David did enjoy that typical rest, yet he also confessed that he was a stranger, as were all his fathers, and so was not come to the inheritance as God promised it to Abraham, Psal. 105. 8, 12. Gen. 13. 15. &c. 17. 8. Ab. 7. 5. Heb. 11. 8, 13. 1 Chron. 29. 15.*

2. Herein they shall inherit glory, *Prov.* 3. 25, even the Kingdom of Christ and of God, when the Lord God shall give unto Jesus Christ the throne of his father *David*: He then as King shall reign in righteousness, and they as Princes shall rule in judgment, *Iſa.* 33. 1. He now washes them from their sins in his blood, and makes them Kings and Priests, and they shall reign on the earth, *Rev.* 1. 5, 6. & 5. 10. they shall reign with Christ a thousand years, *Rev.* 20. 4, 6. the Kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the Kingdom (he saith not, in heaven, but) under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the Saints of the most high, &c. *Dan.* 7. 18, 27. they shall judge the world, *1 Cor.* 6. 2. and have power over the Nations, *Rev.* 2. 26, 28. for Christ will grant them to sit with him on his throne, *Rev.* 3. 21.

3. In this glorious place and Kingdom they shall inherit all things, and God himself shall be their God gloriously, their temple, their light, their salvation, and their portion for ever, *Rev.* 21. 3, 7, 21, 23. So they are said to be heirs of God, and coheirs with Christ, *Rom.* 8. 17. And Christ saith, The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, even of his people, whom he hath chosen for an inheritance, *Psal.* 16. 5. with *Psal.* 33. 12. he will then dwell with them, and gloriously manifest himself unto them, they shall see his face, and inherit eternal life in the perfect knowledge & favour of God, and fellowship with him; yea, they shall reign for ever and ever.

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ce the explicate declaration of the testimony of Christ, pag. 157. 173.

2. Who are the heirs of, and shall be counted worthy to obtain this inheritance? [*All them which are sanctified*] consider here.

1. What it is to sanctifie, and who they are that are sanctified?

2. By what means they are sanctified, and made meet for the inheritance?

1. What it is to sanctifie, and who they are that are sanctified?

* To sanctifie and to be sanctified in Scripture signifies these two things;

1. To separate a person or thing from common and profane use, and so from uncleanness and filthiness, as it usually signifies in our types of old. So *Hezekiah* commanded the *Levites* to sanctifie themselves, and to sanctifie the house of the Lord, and to carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place; and accordingly they sanctified it by carrying out the uncleanness out of it, as is signified, *2 Chron.* 29. 3, 15, 18. and so the sanctifying the people, it was a separating them from those things that were provoking in the eyes of God, or forbidden by him, *Lev.* 20. 2, 8. a severing them from the pollutions and manners of the Nations whom the Lord cast out, *Levit.* 20. 23, 26.

2. To set apart for the Lord, and for his peculiar use and service any thing or person; a devoting or dedicating it to the Lord, that it may be his, and unto him, as were the Priests, and Levites, and Temple, &c. So setting apart unto the Lord, answers to, and is the same with, sanctifying unto him, *Exod.* 13. 2, 11. So here,

They are said to be sanctified, who are cleansed from the errors and pollutions of this world, and devoted to the Lord; separated from uncleanness, and set apart for the Lord; such as come out from among men, and are separated, and touch no unclean thing: Such as in the light and strength of God's promises do cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord, *2 Cor.* 6. 16, 18. & 7. 1. and so the sanctified are such as are daily turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan

to God, *Ad. 16. 18. 3 Tim. 2. 21.* such as to receive the grace of God as to redeem them from all iniquity, and to purify them unto him a peculiar people zealous of good works, *Tit. 2. 14. 12, 14.*

2. The means whereby God in Christ by his Spirit doth sanctifie, (as to persons, I mean, that are come to years of capacity) are,

1. The chief and principal *medium*, is, the word of his grace, in which is declared and commended to us the free grace of God in the blood of Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ is said to sanctifie with the washing of water by the word, even with the kindness and love of God our Saviour, *Eph. 5. 26.* and so he is said to wash in his blood, in which the love of God is commended, and men are said to be sanctified with the blood of the Covenant, *Rev. 1. 5. Heb. 10. 19.* that is the blood of sprinkling, whereby the heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the conscience from dead works to serve the living God, *Heb. 10. 22. 8. 9. 14.* and so they are said to be sanctified by the Spirit in the testimony, and so by the Word, *2 Thes. 2. 13. 1 Pet. 1. 2. Job. 17. 17, 19. Aft. 26. 18.* and these three agree in one, *1 Job. 5. 6, 8.* And indeed the principal means whereby men may be sanctified, born again, and saved, now it is by discovering and commending the love of God to mankind; in lifting up the Son of man by the Spirit in the testimony: So our Saviour signifies in answer to *Nicodemus*, when he asks, *How can these things be?* namely, that a man can be born again; in answer thereto he tells him, *As Moles lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, &c. For God so loved the world (of mankind) that he gave his only begotten Son,* *Joh. 3. 5, 9, 14, 17.* So that which the Apostle preached in order to the sanctifying of the *Corinthians*, who were unholy and prophane: the first thing he delivered to them was, that Christ died for their sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried; and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and tells them, they were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. Seven in and by that good report of him, in which the Father's love was manifested) and by the Spirit of our God. Compare *1 Cor. 15. 1, 4.* with *Chap. 6. 11, 12.* So the Apostle signifies, that

the means whereby he and other believers were saved from their ignorance, disobedience, and serving divers lusts, it was by the appearance of the kindness and love of God our Saviour to man-ward, which is the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghost, *Ti. 3. 3, 6.* It is not the Law as a Law of works, or any observance thereof by men; or endeavouring to frame their hearts thereby to love God and men, and to avoid the evils forbidden, that is the way or means whereby God doth sanctifie; nor is the Law first to be preached to the effecting this sanctification; though men may seek to sanctifie themselves, and purifie themselves thereby, and in so doing account themselves Saints, and be so accounted by others, yet these are none of God's Saints, or sanctified ones, but these shall be consumed together, *Isa. 66. 17* nor is it any peculiar manner of love to mens persons in a personal consideration first discovered to, or working in men before they believe, that is the means for effecting this sanctification, but it is done by the Spirit in glorifying Christ, and therein commending God's love to the world, sinners, and ungodly ones, *Act. 16. 18. 23.* this is the supreme means.

2. And in subserviency and subordination to the former, he doth also cleanse and wash with afflictions, even with the manifold trials and temptations which he is ordering to men while it is called to day, in which he is also purging and causing the dunt to swim aloft, that by this men might be purged, and that the iniquity of his Jacob might be purged, *Isa. 27. 9.* that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from him, *Job 33. 17, 19.* then he sheweth men their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded; he openeth also their ears to discipline, and commandeth them to depart from iniquity, *Job 36. 8, 10.* and sheweth unto men the vanity of their idols, in which they have been trusting, and by which they have been lifting up themselves; according to that, *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth; surely every man is vanity.* *Psal. 39. 15.* He then sheweth, that all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the field, even all their wisdom, strength, goodnells, &c. and so is cleansing and purging them from their sins and idols, that they may live to him, and bring forth more fruit, *Job. 15. 2.* So the Apostle saith,

faith, he chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness, *Heb. 12. 10.* that we may be delivered from our filthiness, (for stripes cleanse the inward parts of the belly) *Prov. 20. 30.* and be dedicated to him, and filled with the fruits of righteousness; and this fruit we reap of it, in being exercised to the consideration of the grace of God in Christ, *that while we were yet without strength in due time Christ dyed for the ungodly, and having access by faith therinto, Heb. 12. 2, 11. Rom. 5. 2, 6. Jam. 1. 2, 5.* Hence afflictions are compared to water, because God is hereby washing and cleansing us, *Psal. 66. 12. Isa. 27. 3.* and to fire, because God is hereby proving, and purifying, and making white, that the trial of the faith of believers being much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tryed with fire, might be found to praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, *Isa. 31. 9. & 48. 10. Zech. 13. 9. 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.* and so the means by which Jesus Christ doth wash, baptize, and sanctifie, are the holy Ghost in the testimony and fire, *Mat. 3. 11. Luk. 3. 16.*

3. How God and the word of his grace doth give, and is able to give them the inheritance?

To this we say, as before is noted, that he doth not now fully and gloriously give it to them in this day; yea, *Abraham* to whom the promises were made, and the rest of the Patriarchs they received not the promises, *Heb. 11. 13, 39.* God gave *Abraham* none inheritance in the actual and glorious enjoyment of it, and he, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, heirs together with him of the same promise, all died in faith, not receiving the promises, *Alti. 7. 5. Heb. 11. 13.* and though *Peter* saith he was a partaker of glory, yet he saith, of the glory that shall be revealed, it is not yet, *1 Pet. 5. 1.* But now,

1. Jesus Christ doth give it them in giving himself to them in the word of his grace, to whom the promises were originally made, *Gal. 3. 16.* who is the heir of all things now actually in our nature, *Heb. 1. 2.* and whose the inheritance is, and who is entred to take possession for us, *Heb. 6. 20.* and so in receiving him they are made sons of God by faith in Christ; Christ is theirs, and they are Christs; *And if sons then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, Rom. 8. 17.*

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things unto him; and he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; all things are theirs as Christ is theirs, even by faith, whether things present, or things to come, and they are Christ's, and if Christ's then are they Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise, *Joh. 3. 35, 36. 1 Cor. 3. 21, 23. Gal. 3. 26, 29.* and so God in giving Christ, as raised from the dead, in the w^{or}ld of his grace, makes an everlasting Covenant with believers, *Isa. 55. 3.* with *Ab. 13, 34.* And so,

2. God doth in and through Christ give it in the word of his grace by promise, which was confirmed of God in Christ before the Law, and now actually ratified and sealed by the death of the Testator, whose blood is the blood of the new Testament, and everlasting Covenant; and so God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise, and they who are Christ's are heirs according to promise, *Gal. 3. 28, 29.* that they might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them, *Heb. 6. 17, 20.* and so as Abraham is said to have received the promise, even in the word of it, and through faith and patience to inherit the promises, even so he gives, and they are receiving it, and are saved by hope, and so by faith and in hope they are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be moved, *Heb. 12. 28.* for he is faithful that promised, having confirmed the Covenant by his blood, and is alive to see it performed, and is the Mediator of it, that the called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, *Heb. 9. 14. Jam. 1. 12. & 2. 5.*

3. He is giving unto them an earnest now, even the holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, *Eph. 1. 13, 14. 2 Cor. 1. 22. & 5. 5.* An earnest is a part of the whole, a first fruits, and so they receive a first fruits of the Spirit, *Rom. 8. 13.* and an earnest is also an assurance and confirmation that they shall have all in due time; this spirit he is now giving unto them to make them partakers of the forgiveness of their sins, to be a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; and so to indue them with a new spirit, judgment, and disposition, to write his Laws in their hearts, and put them in their minds, and to fill them with his fruit, love, joy, peace, long suffering, &c. *Heb. 10. 14, 17. Eph. 1. 17, 18.*

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Gal. 5. 16, 22, 23. and this spirit which is the earnest of the inheritance he is giving unto them, and they receive, through the word of his grace, according to that, Received ye the spirit by the works of the Law, only by the hearing of faith? Gal. 3. 12.

4. Yea, when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, he will give unto them the inheritance gloriously, which here they have been receiving by faith, and hope, and in the earnest and first fruits of it; they shall then inherit all things, and God himself will be with them, their God; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, &c. and this he will give unto them, not according to their works of righteousness, but of grace, yea and according to the rule of the word of his grace; for God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to the Gospel, the word of his grace, and so according to that rule he will give eternal life to them that by patient continuance in well-doing have been seeking glory, honour, and immortality, *Rom. 2. 7, 16.* they shall then be judged according to the Law of liberty, *Jam. 2. 12.* and according thereto, he that believeth the Gospel, and is baptized (sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God) shall be saved, *viz.* shall obtain that salvation in Christ Jesus with eternal glory, *Mark. 16. 16. 1 Tim. 2. 10.* they shall not then be judged according to the Law of works, which is, do and live; and, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them; for according thereto, no flesh living can be justified in his sight; but* by the Law of faith, the word of his grace, in which is declared to us, that this is the will of him that sent Jesus Christ, that every one that now seeth the Son, and believeth in him, should have everlasting life, and he will raise him up at the last day to the glorious enjoyment of it, and so of that inheritance which is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, *Joh. 6. 40. Rom. 4. 16.* and this always excludes boasting; and sheweth that this inheritance will be given to them of grace, and that in Christ (and not in themselves) shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory, *Gal. 3. 23, 24.*

What hath been said to this second branch of the further declaration of the excellency of the person, and thing to which he commits them, *viz.* which is able to give you an inheritance

heritance among all them which are sanctified; may be useful to us.

1. To shew unto us among whom this inheritance is to be enjoyed, and shall be possessed; it is among all them that are sanctified, even by faith in Christ; and let

It is not to be inherited by such who are contentious against the truth, and enemies to the testimony of God concerning Christ, such as these shall inherit folly, *Prov. 14. 18.* and shame shall be their promotion, *Prov. 3. 35*; all that are incensed against Christ shall be ashamed, *Isa. 49. 24*; so such God will render indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish, *Rom. 2. 8, 9*. Whatever inheritances they may have here, and how rich soever they are here, yet then God will in flaming fire take vengeance on them that know not God—*Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*—When he comes to be glorified in his Saints and sanctified ones, *1 Thes. 1. 8, 10.*

2. This inheritance shall not be enjoyed by such as though they profess to know God; and believe his Gospel, yet obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, *1 Thes. 1. 8, 10*. Who though they receive the love of the truth, yet receive it not in such manner, and to such end as to be saved thereby, but still hold fast deceit, and refuse to return, *2 Thes. 2. 10, 12*. This is the will of God, our sanctification, *that we should abstain from fornication, from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*—*He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man but God*, *1 Thes. 4. 3, 8*. Oh let us not deceive our selves, nor be deceived by others, as if we should inherit, though we receive his grace in vain, and suffer it not to save us from our sins and idols; or though we did run well, yet are hindered from obeying the truth. This we know, *that no whoremonger, nor unclea person, nor covetous man which is an idol, nor hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God*, *Eph. 5. 1, 6*; they that do the works of the flesh shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, *Gal. 5. 19, 21. & C. 7. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10*.

3. Nor shall this inheritance be possessed by the children of the bond woman, who are born to the hope of, and challenge the inheritance from some wisdom and strength of the flesh; such as have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; who being ignorant of God's righteousness, and

that they should establish a righteousness of their own, submit not unto the righteousness of God; *Gal. 3. 16, 18. & 4. 21, 30.* such shall not inherit with the children of the promise, who trust in themselves that they are righteous, *Joh. 1. 12, 13.*

2. Seeing there is such an inheritance prepared for the sanctified ones, it may be of usefulness to those that are in Christ Jesus, to walk after the Spirit; and yield up to the saving efficacy of the grace of God; and having such promises to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord; *2nd. 10. 12. who hath called them in holiness, so to be holy.* (separated from uncleanness, and devoted to God) in all manner of conversation, *2 Cor. 7. 1. Col. 3. 1, 3. Heb. 11. 13, 15. 1 Pet. 1. 13, 18. 1 Joh. 3. 1, 3.*

And to chuse rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of this world, having respect unto the recompence of the reward, *Heb. 10. 32, 34. & 11. 24, 26. & 12. 13, 14. 2 Cor. 6. 16, 18.*

3. It shews the blessedness of the sanctified ones, though they are generally the poor of this world, and for Christ's sake killed all the day long, and appointed as sheep for the slaughter, yet they are rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which God hath prepared for them that love him, *Jam. 1. 5. & 1. 12. & 5. 11. Isa. 54. 6, 17.*

4. In that the inheritance is among all them that are sanctified, it may instruct them to live together according to knowledge, and as heirs together of the grace of life, that their prayers be not hindered, *1 Pet. 3. 7. Eph. 4. 32.*

5. Yea, and it may strengthen them with strength in their souls not to fear, for it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom, *147. 19. 29. 31.* and therefore though now they walk in the midst of trouble, he will revive them, he will stretch forth his hand against the wrath of their enemies (those grievous Wolves, &c. that spare not the flock) and his right hand shall save them; and though he hath removed eminent and faithful instruments, yet the Lord will perfect (by the word of his grace) what concerns them; his mercy endureth for ever, he will not forsake the works of his own hands, *Ps. 138. 7. & 147. 1. & 150. 1.*

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

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